

The Christian Scholar

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE EDITOR'S PREFACE	171
THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS UTTERANCE .. <i>Geddes MacGregor</i>	173
THE RELIGIOUS USE OF LANGUAGE <i>John A. Hutchison</i>	182
RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD	<i>Paul Tillich</i> 189
THE NECESSITY OF FAITH	<i>Joseph Sittler</i> 198
THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES IN ACCEPTING THEOLOGICAL STATEMENTS <i>Peter Alexander</i>	206
MYTHOS AND LOGOS	<i>Brooks Otis</i> 219
BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS	
<i>The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism</i> by Philip Wheelwright	<i>Nathan A. Scott, Jr.</i> 232
<i>The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Vol. 2: Mythical Thought</i> by Ernest Cassirer	<i>Van A. Harvey</i> 237
REPORTS AND NOTICES	
British Dons' Conference	<i>William H. Poteat</i> 241
A Research Project	243
The Faculty Christian Fellowship Movement	<i>Richard N. Bender</i> 244
New Commission Director	247
Faculty Christian Fellowship Director	247

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The Editor's Preface

A critical temper characterizes much of contemporary thought. Literature, the social sciences, most of the arts, philosophy, history, and theology have all been involved in considerations of the nature of knowledge, the problems of language, and the relation between language and knowledge. This complex of issues has for some time been of concern to those of us who are responsible for *The Christian Scholar*. It is interdisciplinary; it concerns the scholar in his central task; and, it is of foremost significance for those who would *be* and *think* as Christians in the realms of scholarship. When a Christian considers the nature of his knowledge, for example—both within his academic discipline and as a person who confesses the Christian faith—he finds that he must employ a language whose adequacy to the reality known must be evaluated and analyzed. He must ask whether his concepts—the “graspers” of reality—catch hold of and convey the meanings he has in mind, *i.e.*, whether his linguistic apparatus is on the one hand rooted in the reality he seeks to know and on the other hand whether it is communicative of that reality to others. Problems of logic, epistemology, and semantics immediately become apparent; and, in addition, the very nature of that which is known is indicated by the approach to and the solution of these problems.

We are indebted to Rudolph Bultmann for having called attention to this issue in modern theology, though he was not the first to have done so. He, however, sharpened the issue by insisting that the problem of Christian apologetics is found in the fact that the

biblical concepts, generally, and the characteristic terms of the Gospel, in particular, have little or no meaning to contemporary man. The problem is, no doubt, much more complicated than Bultmann's solution seems to suggest. Only to “demythologize” the Bible—to strip it of its special ways of understanding the world and man—is superficial as a solution in itself. Perhaps a more radical and thoroughgoing “reinterpretation” of all our languages—in psychology, economic theory, history, aesthetics, politics, and the rest—is actually called for. As someone once suggested to Bultmann, it is the modern mind, not the Bible, which needs demythologizing! The truth is found between the extremes, and what is called for is a relating of the languages to one another.

All of our languages have been profoundly influenced by the modern revolution in the natural sciences and by its often hidden cosmological commitments. Some of the “schools” of critical philosophy want to reduce all talk to physical language and mathematical terms. The rest of language is referred to as “a series of squeaks.” But language of whatever sort involves some type or types of metaphysical commitments, and these become interwoven, however incoherently, into the fabric of modern man's languages. Attention has been increasingly called, both in biblical and other studies, to the need for making explicit the nature of the terms, concepts, and symbols which are employed. At the same time, moreover, consideration of the nature of the reality known by such terms, concepts, and symbols must follow, if indeed the explication of them

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

would be thorough. Were Kant to have been fully alert to this interrelated problem at the end of the eighteenth century, his famous *Critiques* would perhaps have centered upon language rather than upon the limits and scope of knowledge, and he would have been more cautious in his apparent rejection of metaphysical knowledge. In any event, the interrelated problems of language and knowledge pose a responsibility for those who would be intelligent Christians, both because of their desire to know their faith more fully and to make it more intelligible in the areas of specialized knowledge where they engage in the tasks of scholarship.

Both as Christians and as scholars then we are challenged to engage systematically in the discovery of the symbols and categories in all the various languages modern man employs, and especially those which tend to deal with a dimension of human experience approaching that with which Christianity is also concerned. These must be discovered, in part, because the Christian seeks to speak relevantly to himself *qua* scholar and to his colleagues; and, in part, too, these symbols must be discovered so that at least some of them may become baptized into the service of Christ and the Gospel. The challenge of engaging in this task of discovery is, therefore, two-fold; in the first place, the Christian must be concerned with language if he would understand the faith in which he stands; and, in the

second place, the Christian must be so concerned if he would have his contemporaries better understand the message that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

It is for these reasons that the content of this issue of *The Christian Scholar* is devoted wholly to the breadth of this problem. This number is evidence of our firm conviction that the type of thought which is called reflective, whether it concerns matters of "faith" or of "fact", is symbolic in character. And, reflective thought is, in turn, the kind of thought apart from which distinctly *human* life is impossible. As Ernst Cassirer pointed out in his book, *An Essay on Man*, "without symbolism the life of man would be like that of the prisoners in the cave of Plato's famous simile. Man's life would be confined within the limits of his biological needs and his practical interests; it could find no access to the 'ideal world' which is opened to him from different sides by religion, art, philosophy, and science." In man's search for what it means to be and to stay human, he returns perennially to symbols for the expression of ultimate meaning. The life of the Christian, as a man of faith, clusters around vivid and compelling symbols. Some of these are old but, we believe, not emptied of power and truth; others are newer and gain meaning both from the realm of our general experience and from the special life which is "hidden with Christ in God."

The Nature of Religious Utterance

GEDDES MACGREGOR

ALL LANGUAGE IS METAPHORICAL, or none is, wrote Croce in the *Estetica*. Croce was writing in 1901, when Russell was still in his twenties, and a decade before the first edition of the *Principia Mathematica*. The extensive work in the logical analysis of language that has come to be taken for granted in contemporary philosophical discussion was not even begun. Croce was no more a religious philosopher than are the modern logical empiricists, though he was less surreptitiously dogmatic about religion than some of these have been. He dismissed religion and mystical experience from his idealistic philosophy with that Neapolitan gaiety that may sound very 'pagan', not least to 'Gothic' piety; but there is at any rate nothing in him of that ferociously aggressive and heavily-disguised anti-religious preoccupation that the discerning find in so much of the work of so many of the later thinkers who have been influential in the professional philosophy of the English-speaking world.

What has a Christian scholar to learn from a view of the nature of language such as Croce offers? At the outset he can find a clue to the reasons for the extraordinary sterility of so much contemporary discussion and its remarkable inadequacy for coping with those very problems that he finds most interesting, important and exciting. Logical empiricism has, of course, modified some of the wilder utterances made by its protagonists in the more immature phase of its development. But it remains plain to every Christian thinker, not to mention others, that most of the linguistic analysis that has come into fashion is based on a radical mistake about the nature of language itself. One does not have to be Christian to suspect this to be so; but the kind of experience that a Christian enjoys does put him at an advantage, since he is thereby rendered incapable of being even partially satisfied by theories of language that so patently fail to explain commonplaces of his experience.

In Urban's account of what he calls 'the gradual dissolution of *philosophia perennis*', at the conclusion of his *Language and Reality*, he wrote:

The gradual dissolution of *philosophia perennis* has been described by Mauthner as '*die langsame Selbstersetzung des Metaphorischen*'. The slow but sure breaking up of natural metaphysic arose out of an increasing literalism. The assumption that only words that have literal significance have significance at all, and that scientific concepts are literal copies, almost automatically turned all other concepts into anthropomorphisms. Thus it is that modern thought, like the fabled bird of old, has been eating out its own heart. For in tearing out all anthropomorphisms, all human metaphors, it has in the end cut the ground from under all knowledge. So long as the literal character of scientific concepts could be maintained, it was only metaphysical knowledge that was in question, but now that it is seen that science works with its own type of metaphors, that the concepts of science are themselves symbols, and in that sense anthropomorphic, scientific knowledge becomes likewise suspect.

The inevitably metaphorical and symbolic character of all language has been one of the main contentions of this study. As it is failure to recognize this fact that has led

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THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

to the breaking up of natural metaphysic, so a return of understanding—perhaps through a more critical and sophisticated evaluation of scientific concepts themselves—may lead to a reinstatement of its essential characters in a new form. In any case, it is precisely this dissolution of *philosophia perennis* which is the outstanding feature of modern culture. The forces which have led to it . . . may be directly connected with . . . Neo-nominalism. . . . Nominalism in all its forms is the most terrible of all heresies, no less from a metaphysical than from a religious point of view. In so far as it concerns language, it leads, as we have seen, to paralysis of speech and stultification of all discourse. But in that, language and intuition are inseparable, knowledge and language parts of one whole, stultification of discourse is but a reflection of a deeper unintelligibility at the very heart of knowledge and thought. This, it is increasingly realized, is the crucial problem of modern culture.¹

Urban, upholding what has been called the 'root metaphor theory' of metaphysics, maintains that there is a type of metaphor that is taken from 'the primary and irreducible domains' of experience, and which he calls 'fundamental'. So one kind of metaphysics uses the category, 'life' metaphorically, while another so uses the category, 'mind'. So also it follows, on such a view, that the metaphysical symbol, the 'fundamental metaphor', differs in important respects from every other type of symbol: for example, the subject of analogous predication is the *omnitudo realitatis*, and the predicates must of necessity be of a certain character. It is not within the scope of this paper to consider all that might be said for and against such a view. I am drawing attention to it only to show, rather, how radically it is opposed to the views of contemporary empiricists on the nature of language. But it opens up what must be for Christian scholars an extremely interesting question: if language is metaphorical to anything at all like the extent that writers like Urban suggest, religious utterances must be analyzed and criticized and evaluated in a very different manner from that provided for in any of the modern techniques for the analysis of either logical propositions or linguistic statements. Nevertheless, this would not be so because of the peculiar character of religious utterances (the logical empiricists have tried to take some account of what they regard as special classes of statements) so much as for the reason that in *all* language, the quest for a 'literal meaning' is as futile as would be the search for a 'tonal meaning' in music. There is indeed such a thing as musical analysis (Donald Francis Tovey wrote a standard work in five volumes so entitled), but anyone who imagined that music could be *interpreted* by any sort of mathematical analysis would be rightly accounted the victim of the more primitive superstitions of the Pythagoreans. Yet music certainly has a grammar, and it is plainly more susceptible to mathematical treatment than is any living language. It is indeed an international language that anyone who knows anything at all about the theory of music can see to be all ready for mathematical analysis. No less plainly, however, there is no music conceivable whose meaning could ever be explained or interpreted in terms of any such analysis, or in terms of anything even at all like this, I have myself heard Tovey, who was much more verbally gifted than are most great musicians and musicologists, stop in the

¹Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Language and Reality*, (Macmillan, 1939), p. 721 f.

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS UTTERANCE

course of giving a lecture on musical appreciation, sit down at the piano and say: *This is what I mean. . . .*

Is language fundamentally different from music? Or, for that matter, is it radically different from any other sort of artistic communication? There are certainly different sorts of musical utterances, as there are different kinds of linguistic utterances; but is there, even in music, the most 'formal' of the arts, any utterance that is supposed to convey meaning and whose meaning is 'self-contained' after the fashion to be expected of 'literal' statements? Yet music is used not only for emotional communication, by lovers, for example, but non-emotively, to communicate musical concepts. Such concepts may be comparatively simple or extremely elaborate; they are always, however, living. All musical utterances may be very precisely analyzed; but the meaning always transcends the analysis. You can no more expect to 'get at' the meaning from a radical musical analysis than you can expect to 'get at' the life of a man by means of radical surgery.

Language reveals, and at the same time partially conceals, a life that lies beyond it. This implies that there is 'in' language a fundamentally unanalyzable element. Speech, a channel of the communication of ideas, is a channel that is always capable of bearing more ideas than the speaker intends. Like the medieval cathedral builders who, it has been said, built better than they knew, every user of human language may communicate more than he knows. This fact was brought home to me sharply when I was recently listening to a well-trained choir of college students singing Benjamin Brittain's *Ceremony of Carols*. It happened that I knew many of the singers, and the fact that these were, for the most part, very intelligent young men and women brought up in an acutely secularistic atmosphere, could not escape me. I could not but be aware that most of them had no more understanding of what they were singing than I should have of a song I had been taught by a clever Japanese instructor to sing in his own language, of which I am entirely ignorant. How could they have understood, for example, the delicate and complex significance of the concepts presented in the fifteenth-century *Adam lay ibowndyn?*

'ne hadde the appil take ben,
the appil take ben,
'ne hadde never our lady
a ben Hevene qwen.
blyssid be the tyme
that appil take was!
Therfore we mown syngyn
Deo gracias.'

There could hardly be, in a pleasant assemblage of Jewish, Unitarian and Quaker students majoring in Political Science, Anthropology, and the like, much religious understanding of what they were singing. Nevertheless, the concepts were somehow communicated to some persons in the audience who did understand, and who perhaps in some cases recalled the famous utterance in the hymn sung in the

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Latin Church at the blessing of the tapers on Easter Eve: 'O happy guilt that deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer!'

And yet this is the sort of thing that is happening all the time, wherever words are used. Out of his story-book, the seven-year old child pipes: 'The prince fell in love with the princess and so they got married.' These words are not at all meaningless to the child. On the contrary, he can generally give a fairly clear account of his understanding of them, which, far from being negligible, is quite correct as far as it goes. When we go on to say that it obviously cannot go 'as far as' that of almost any adult, what exactly do we mean? I submit that we are in fact affirming, in this judgment, that it is not a question of grasping, say, a 'literal' meaning, and then a 'metaphorical' one, and finally perhaps, a 'super-metaphor', as though there were a certain number of levels of meaning as there are a certain number of levels of platforms in a railroad station. On the contrary, one does not climb or jump from one level of language to another one beyond it, but penetrate, rather, a greater 'distance'. If we *must* speak in terms of 'levels', we had better recognize an infinite number of these.

While it is obvious that no child could grasp as much of the meaning of the phrase in the child's story-book as could an adult, it is also true that some adults could understand it much better than could others. It is a commonplace that the significance of marriage often grows in the minds of a 'happily' married couple. In the first year or two they understand some of it; in the next few years they are said to understand it 'more deeply', that is, 'better'. After five or six years, let us suppose, they become Christians, and the significance of their marriage is further 'opened out' to them, and goes on being 'opened out'. It is easy to see that the verb 'to marry' gradually acquires more and more meaning in their minds. But so also may the nouns 'prince' and 'princess'. To some these may be symbols of glamorous persons, male and female respectively, while to others, more empirically-minded, they signify individuals of a certain rank in the hierarchy of a monarchal state, and so forth. But it is never a question of a literal and a metaphorical meaning, or even of a series of metaphors, for if this were the case one might have to suppose the child starting off with an understanding of the metaphor and then working his way on to the literal meaning after having taken some lessons in European history.

Words, then, far from being mere 'names' or 'sounds' or 'breathings', attached like labels to 'things' or 'individuals', and sometimes issued in duplicate or triplicate and assigned to different things, are the foci, rather, into which are stored concepts, feelings, and other communicable data, and out of which may be drawn so much meaning by each individual who hears them. We have this in mind when we say, for example, that such and such a word is a 'rich' word. Its richness does not make it any the better if it does not happen to fit the purpose I have in mind for it. It is still not the *right* word, any more than Sir Winston Churchill would, for all the richness of his personality, be the right man for the job of delivering the

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS UTTERANCE

morning's milk. But its richness does make it a word that a clever writer or speaker may use for a greater variety of purposes than that for which he can use a poor one. Also, a word may be very rich from one point of view and not at all from another : in one way the adjective 'labyrinthine' is rich ; but the preposition 'in' is in some important ways very much richer.

Sentences consist of words, and they have a certain structure. In most of the languages we are likely to learn they must have, for example, what grammarians have called a finite verb. But there is nothing sacrosanct about sentence-structure. The words 'O glorious and immaculate Virgin Mary' might be just as much a sentence as 'Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is a virgin, is glorious, and was conceived free of what theologians call original sin,' though they do not conform to the grammarians' convention of what a sentence must be. Moreover, since language precedes grammar, people may utter sentences without any knowledge of grammatical analysis, as they utter words without any etymological learning. They may be surprised, indeed, to discover, as was Molière's Monsieur Jourdain, that they have been talking prose all their life. They have also, however, been talking poetry without ever having heard of prosody or free verse. A sentence is, in fact, only a complex word. As there may be rules about the use of the hyphen in certain compound words, so there are rules about the structure of sentences, and even stylistic canons about the structure of chapters or books. Sentences may be disorganized, as an ailing body may be disorganized ; but so long as they are living they may be the bearers of meaning.

Whence comes the meaning they bear ? Ostensibly, from the mind of the person who uses them. But we have seen that such a person may not himself be aware of the full import of what he is successfully communicating to another. A little child may inadvertently draw a trefoil or a cross on his copybook, so communicating to me and many others the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation, though the child knows nothing of what he is communicating. But so also may I by such means communicate, to a person of greater Christian experience than I, far more than I can know, whether by word, sentence, picture or other symbol. For minds do not fashion words : they use them. Even neologisms are not created *ex nihilo*. And since we are so constantly using words, and using them successfully, without fully appreciating their significance, only two explanations are possible concerning the fact of communication : either the 'receiver' of my words and sentences and pictures *puts* the rest of the meaning into them all by himself (that is, himself including his unconscious) or else meaning is somehow transmitted by some other agency, who is also using the words as a medium of communication.

The naturalistic thesis that, at most, language carries from the speaker to the hearer only what the speaker intends, plus what the hearer is able to add to this, is a thesis that is exceedingly difficult to maintain. For we are constantly growing through reading and listening to others, and often we are growing faster than are the people who are writing and speaking to us. You go to some obscure bethel and,

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

being yourself unversed in Christian doctrine, you listen to a dull sermon by a preacher undistinguished either by his eloquence or by his personality. There is nothing there to stimulate any emotion in you unless it be a vague feeling of irritation or a sense of wasting your time. The preacher, let us suppose, is himself not very sure of or clear about what he is saying, nor are you emotionally susceptible to what is being said. Nevertheless, if you are listening, a 'message' (let us again suppose) gets across to you. Your interest is aroused. You want to learn more about what he was trying to say. You are eventually 'converted.' Perhaps you even go to tell him that his sermon was the 'occasion' of your conversion, and you are puzzled to find that he is not only even duller than you had thought, but is also even less sure than you had supposed of the 'message' that you find changing your whole attitude toward life.

A God-centered philosophy has of course no difficulty in accounting for such happenings. For such a philosophy, language is as much God's tool, to say the least, as it is anybody else's. I find it very difficult to believe that even the *problem* of communication can be understood apart from God, not least when I find myself being credited by people with having taught them things that at the time I did not know myself . . . things I know I did not know then. Like St. Christopher who unwittingly carried the Christ-child, my words have been the bearers of a meaning beyond that which I could understand myself at the time I uttered them.

No emotive theory of language can adequately explain the phenomena I have in mind. There is a very profound story told of a missionary who, having an insufficient knowledge of the Chinese language, was giving catechetical instruction to some Chinese converts with the help of a very able interpreter. 'The Lord,' he said, is 'omniscient . . . omnipotent . . . and of infinite mercy.' He paused for his interpreter to take up his cue and was somewhat disappointed when the latter, after a moment's careful reflection translated: 'Reverend gentleman says you are very well.' This is, I am told, about the nearest one can get in Chinese. And yet the meaning is not entirely lost, for all is indeed well with you if such a God is reigning and you recognize the reign. What has been communicated to you is no doubt much less than the whole panorama of Christian doctrine; but it is a conceptual communication, if it is a communication at all, not merely the passing on of a feeling. The story indicated what seems to me to be an extreme case of something that is happening all the time.

All this is not to say that there is no such thing as theological confusion, about religion that is passed on in theological utterances. Theologians whose concern is to clarify thought about God, are of course as subject to confusion as are any other specialists liable to confusion in their own fields. In order to be able to clarify one must be subject to the possibility of making a mistake. The failure of a theological exposition is not, however, necessarily a failure in the use of language: linguistic confusions usually are, rather, as Professor Hodges has recently said, 'a symptom of

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS UTTERANCE

confused standpoints.² By a 'standpoint' Hodges means, 'a set of principles or presuppositions, together with the type of question to which they give rise and the way of looking at things which results from them.'³ To any such standpoint belongs a language, and the puzzles that have arisen have often arisen because standpoints have not been distinguished carefully enough. Hodges toys with the possibility of philosophy becoming not what it is so much at present, linguistic analysis, but, rather, standpoint-analysis. Such a philosophy, he suggests, will have five characteristics: (1) it will require to understand the standpoint it considers; (2) it will be 'in a certain sense a dramatic study'; (3) it must be dialectical; (4) it must be normative, so as to judge between rival standpoints; and (5) it will provide an existential judgment. This means above all that a 'standpoint-philosopher,' having brought to his task all the sympathy towards his opponents that he can muster, will find in the history of thought the 'dramatic shape of philosophic thinking' that reveals both agreement and genuine conflict. Standpoint-analysis must in the end, however, Hodges admits, display fundamental conflicts, and the existential choice that leads to an acceptance of Christian doctrine, for example, is 'a moral act — ethical in the deepest sense.'

I have drawn attention to Professor Hodges' recent work on this subject in order to exhibit what seems to me to be the general direction in which philosophy must travel before it can solve the problem of the nature of religious utterance. For Christian experience it can never be enough to talk about God in terms of any 'natural' theology, even, for instance, that of St. Thomas. No theological proposition such as 'God is omniscient' can ever be as satisfactory as 'O my God, who knowest all things.' It is perhaps for this very reason that St. Augustine's most significant theological work (I use the adjective 'significant' advisedly) is his *Confessions*, which is from beginning to end in the form of a prayer to God. Genuinely theological utterance must be dramatic. For the word 'God' is to all possible knowledge, including 'theology', what 'I' is to 'me'. There is no conceivable number of propositions about God that could adequately 'define' him; nor should this surprise me, since there is no conceivable number of propositions about me that could adequately define even me. Yet I am aware, unless I am a hopeless megalomaniac, that I am not an inexhaustible personality *in my own right*. The mystery of my inexhaustibility as a person is not only not explicable but not even discoverable except in view of my complete dependence on God my Creator.

So the linguistic analysis of religious utterance must be the analysis of *liturgical* utterance. For it is, indeed, only in their liturgical form that theological propositions do acquire meaning. Liturgy is poetry, and in poetry one expects metaphor: poetry *is* metaphor. But liturgy is not only a special form of poetry, but a special kind of ode. There is much metaphor that is significant in the ode that would be insignificant

²H. A. Hodges, *Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes* (London, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1953), p. 21.

³*Idem*, p. 15.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

and bathetic in other poetical forms. Shelley addresses the skylark:

‘Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert.’

To say the least, much of the meaning disappears as soon as the metaphorical language is translated into the third-personal form:

‘The skylark a blithe spirit is;
It never was a bird.’

It is only in the context of an address to God that the extremely elaborate metaphorical speech of which religious utterance is composed can even begin to be understood. One of the first predicates of God that one discovers in an analysis of Christian liturgical utterance (not to mention that of some other religions) is his ‘otherness.’ In the relation that I express as soon as I utter prayer, God is before all else *other than I*, and other than the other persons whom I associate with me when I say, for example, ‘our Father.’ An analysis of the liturgical documents, the liturgical classics, exhibits this at once, and much better than can any theological exposition, neo-Calvinist or otherwise, that God is *ganz anders, totaliter aliter*, and so forth. In any theological statement that may be made about God, or indeed about anything that may properly be called ‘religious’, the essentially liturgical meaning is at the best attenuated, probably destroyed. Any meaning that remains, remains only to the extent that there is a liturgical reference in the mind of the reader or hearer. ‘I must pray’ and ‘we must pray’ are meaningful; but not so, ‘one must pray, must one not?’ Yet this last is just the sort of utterance that is commonly presented for analysis.

Liturgical action is unique: so, likewise, are its verbal and other symbolic expressions. A visitor to an act of Christian worship may quite naturally suppose when he hears someone stand up and affirm a belief that Jesus Christ is sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty—such a visitor may well suppose that an implicate of the worshipper’s affirmation is that Jesus Christ is at present sitting down somewhere with God the Father situated at his left hand. The visitor might equally well suppose that the thurifer is swinging his censor, (a) in order to provide himself and others with a pleasant olfactory sensation, and (b) because, leading a sedentary life, he finds this a convenient way in which to take exercise. Only a diligent⁴ analysis of the entire liturgy, with all its historical references, for example, could give him any prospect of ‘placing’ these symbolic words and actions, which can of course be understood only in relation to their context, a liturgical one. In order that he should actually ‘grasp’ the meaning of these or any other metaphors or symbols, he would also have to take part in the action himself. Precisely what minimum of ‘togetherness’ with the liturgical ‘actors’ would be required of him in his task is arguable. What appears to me to be, in the light of Christian experience and the present state of philosophical discussion, beyond profitable dispute, is that

⁴*diligere*, to love, take delight in.

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS UTTERANCE

Christians who are scholarly enough to ask even the most elementary theological questions ought to take the trouble to learn some liturgical history, so that they may be in a better position to discover the answers. The present liturgical illiteracy of so many scholars and teachers—theologians not excepted—is such as to warrant the experiment of a better liturgical education for those who wish to know, and may be required to expound to others, the nature of religious utterance. What is chiefly and most widely forgotten about such utterance is that in its original form (whither scholars ought by nature to repair) it is always in the second person singular. *Lex orandi, lex credendi.*

The Religious Use of Language

JOHN A. HUTCHISON

 OFTEN DURING PARTICIPATION in religious activities I have caught myself asking, What am I doing? I read the Bible, I say a prayer or participate in worship, I listen to a sermon or preach a sermon, I participate in ceremonies ranging from baptism to Holy Communion or the funeral service, and I ask myself, What goes on here? Or I study other religions, religious activities of other times and places of the world's history, and the same insistent question recurs. In what terms shall we understand such human actions? The most fruitful and illuminating answer I have found is that religion in all its range and variety consists of symbols for the ultimate meaning of human existence.

This view of religion owes much to the studies of symbolism undertaken by Ernst Cassirer and Suzanne Langer, whose work on this subject has done so much to break down the narrow limits of rationalism, forcing us to take such activities as art and myth as serious aspects of the mind's life. But while I gladly acknowledge my debt at this point, I must distinguish my own view from the neo-Kantian idealism which runs through Cassirer's pages. Rather I wish to insist that the world in which these various symbolic enterprises take place is in some basic way independent of the mind which finds expression and fulfilment in them. Thus, in the most fundamental sense it is the part of wisdom to come to terms with the world,—though the world is surely larger and more varied than many realistic philosophies have allowed.

It may illuminate our view of religion to relate it briefly to two further contemporary types of philosophic thought, Logical Positivism and Existentialism. Logical Positivism has involved a central distinction between rational meaning and emotive meaning, or as it is sometimes expressed, between statements whose meaning can be rationally communicated and tested, and those other verbal forms whose function is purely emotive or expressive. We need not follow this distinction into the labyrinthine intricacies and extremes to which Logical Positivism has so often led in order to discover its great utility for the study of religion. As the Logical Positivists suggest, the scientific and religious uses of language *are* profoundly different. Indeed it seems a fruitful lead for the study of religion to acknowledge that religion is a species of emotive meaning and to develop independently the implications of this observation.

Perhaps the most constrictive and serious defect of Logical Positivism is its denial that emotive meaning has any intelligible structure, any rationale. Such an assertion consigns this important part of the mind's life to the outer darkness of arbitrary caprice. The problem is rather to see what mode of rationality, if any, is at work in such symbolic enterprises as art and religion. To assert or assume a

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THE RELIGIOUS USE OF LANGUAGE

priori that they are rationally meaningless is a form of dogmatism particularly odd in a philosophy which calls itself empirical.

The form of emotive meaning which is distinctive to religion is that which lies at the foundation of human subjecthood. Religion may thus be accurately described as emotive meaning which is taken existentially. We need not here labor the point that the central tradition of modern philosophy has in its preoccupation with such problems as nature, mind, knowledge, etc., singularly neglected the actual nature of human selfhood or subjecthood. It is the achievement of Existentialism to have returned the question, What is man? to the center of philosophic inquiry. The 'existence' referred to in Existentialism is the existence of actual human selves. The answers which Existentialists have given to this question have by no means always been religious or congenial to religion. But the central question is a crucial one for religion. It is for this reason that Existentialism, like Nicodemus, gives the impression of being not far from the kingdom of God.

On the question of religious language, Existentialism is helpful in pointing out the source of such language in imagination, which is a favorite category of Existentialist philosophers. But it is even more helpful in pointing out the reference of religious language as man's life not viewed from any grandstand but from the playing field of active human existence. Thus again, religion is emotive meaning taken existentially, that is, in terms of which actual men actually live and act.

II

But what now are the important characteristics of this use of language? In attempting to answer this question we shall be undertaking very briefly and superficially a phenomenology of religious language. Such a phenomenological description must be broad enough to cover the widely varying occurrences of religious or mythical language. In addition to the ostensible religions, it must include the wide variety of current religious substitutes, ranging as it does from Marxism and Nazism to the American Dream or to Scientism.

Indeed in any *Weltanschauung* or system of life-orientation two types of statements seem discernible. The statements which are premises or assumptions and which function as foundations of the system are religious or mythical in nature. To them the mind gives that particular type of allegiance or trust which religion traditionally calls faith. Human reason then applies these assumptions or postulates to the most general structures and processes of the world, and philosophy, or more specifically ontology, is the result.

Religion and philosophy seem thus to be related as Siamese twins. Or more specifically, all philosophies have religious foundations (whether they admit it or not) and all religions have philosophic implications. Here we are not so much interested in the nature of philosophy or philosophic statements as we are in the nature of religious or mythical statements whose nature we see to be that of establish-

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

ing the mind's fundamental orientation in existence. But what are the traits of such religious statements? We shall list and briefly discuss four.

(1) Religious statements are analogical or metaphorical. To be sure, all language is metaphorical in one important and basic sense. Every term is based upon some analogy between different individual objects, events or relations. Every common noun is a kind of dead metaphor. But religious terms or words are metaphorical in a further and distinctive sense. For religion seeks to express man's orientation to an object which is in some way unique and transcendent. Yet it must do so by words drawn from within common human experience. What other words are there? This problem is solved by the use of analogy. God is described by likening him to this or that object within experience. To be sure, he is also unlike such common objects; this unlikeness is underscored by the holiness of God to which we shall presently allude. But he is said to be like such common objects as a father, husband, shepherd, judge, warrior, shade from the sun's heat, fire, tower of refuge, —to cite only a few metaphors to be found in the Bible. Even such a term as the 'Most High' is surely a spatial metaphor; and the term 'Lord' is a sociological metaphor. Indeed such opaque terms as 'transcendent' and 'immanent' reveal metaphors in their Latin etymology.

This view of religious language has similarities with the Thomist *analogia entis* or analogy of being. But there are differences as well. Thomism believes it possible by rational demonstration to establish the existence of a transcendent deity whose nature is subsequently elucidated by analogy. Here no such prior demonstration is presupposed. Indeed our whole use of the concept of analogy is enormously less rationalistic and more relativistic than that of Thomism.

Our use of analogy also raises immediately the further question, *Which* analogy or metaphor? How shall we choose between conflicting metaphors? The answer is that men choose the metaphors which most adequately express and sustain for them the meaning of existence, and they reject those which contradict or stultify that meaning. As Santayana once remarked, "That life has meaning, how impossible a conclusion and yet how necessary an assumption." No process of reasoning can possibly suffice to establish that man's life has meaning. Yet all men, by their continued existence, if by nothing else, testify to their faith that life does have meaning. That is a good metaphor which expresses and sustains this meaning; that is a bad metaphor which contradicts or stultifies that meaning. This is a point to which we must return later.

Different religions or religious traditions can be approached as systems of metaphor or analogy which take some root metaphor, expressing, expanding and developing it in myth and rite. Much light can be shed on any religion by a careful analysis of such root metaphors and the role they play in the religion. Such study involves the use in the analysis of religious documents of tools forged by students

THE RELIGIOUS USE OF LANGUAGE

of literature. It is for example religiously as well as esthetically illuminating to examine carefully the structure of metaphors in such documents as II Isaiah or the *Bhagavad Gita*.

(2) Religious language is not only metaphorical; it is poetic or imaginative. Historically speaking the relation between myth and poetry is clear enough. But let us see if we cannot get a better hold on this relation by a look at the role of imagination in both poetry and myth.

Imagination is in many respects the primal form of human mentality. It may be described as the 'place of images' or more prosaically as the mind's capacity for forming images. By an image I mean any immediate datum of human consciousness. Images are to be distinguished from concepts by just this element of immediacy. From images as they occur, in all their immediacy and spontaneity, the mind by the work of abstracting, builds concepts.

Perhaps the commonest and simplest form of images are the so-called representative images of empirical objects. Thus I have in my mind, as I write, images of the paper and typewriter before me. Even here in such simple objects the creative power of the mind is apparent in the selection and organization of the elements which make up such objects.

But to see the full nature of imagination we must turn from such representative images to what Richard Kroner has called the subjective imagination. At some point in its development the mind tears itself free from the world and begins to live its own free, subjective life. Surely it is an important chapter in the life-history of an individual person when this happens,—when the self becomes what Augustine calls a 'great deep' where images freely and spontaneously well up from mysterious depths and live their own spontaneous and often capricious life. This aspect of the mind's life is better described by stream of consciousness novels, by poetry or by psychoanalysis than it is by most treatises of academic psychology.

Imagination so described seems essential for an understanding of both the creation and appreciation of art. The image is a fundamental category in art. It is through the evocation of fresh and creative images, in whatever medium he is working, that the artist says what he has to say. Poetry might in this context be described as imaginative language. As in the case of all art, its end is simply the joy of contemplating the images evoked in the hearer's mind by the poet's words. There is to be sure some insight, some illumination in this pleasure. At times as in a lyric poem this may be just a luminous quality in the pleasant image. At other times, as in the case of an epic poem, it may be a kind of intuitive wisdom concerning the whole nature and destiny of man. But the point is that in artistic experience there is no purpose ulterior to the immediate enjoyment of the work of art.

Imagination is as essential to the understanding of religious experience as it is of art. This is particularly true of our knowledge of God, or of God's self-revela-

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

tion to us. If we ask how, or through what process God speaks to man, or what is the mode of our human reception of revelation, the answer is that it is always through the medium of powerful images which impress themselves upon our human imagination. It is indeed not too much to say that a religious experience is a process of being hit by such images and of responding in obedience to their authority.

Imagination is important not only for such crucial moments of revelation but for the whole religious life. Prayer, worship, ritual, through them all, imagination has an essential part to play. It is the mode of religious perception or reception. Thus religion may accurately be described as poetry that men live by.

This is asserted not only to describe the role of imagination in religious thinking; it is also asserted against those who unimaginatively assert that religion is a kind of celestial science. But on the other hand, we must resist the attempt of writers like Santayana or Edman to reduce religion completely and without remainder to poetry. It is poetry *men live by*. There is in religion as there is not in art a claim to authority. This is why religions always seem to involve an ethic, but why artistic experience has no such ingredient.

(3) But if religion consists of metaphorical images, the question arises, To what end? The answer is that they seek to express or articulate ultimate concern or ultimate meaning. Tillich and Niebuhr have argued long and persuasively that ultimate concern or meaning stands at the heart of religion. Among the various concerns or interests which make up a personality, one appears to assume top priority. In this sense it takes on absolute or ultimate meaning for the person who holds it. It is dependent upon no other concerns, but gives meaning to the other concerns of a person's life. In this respect it is like the coordinates of a graph. It is also absolute in that its field of application is the whole of one's life. In contrast with limited interests, its scope is unlimited, affecting everything which a person does. A third meaning which follows from these two is that such a concern carries life and death seriousness.

In defining religion in these terms we have actually defined a religious response; we have characterized the adjective 'religious' rather than the noun 'religion.' It is this quality of ultimacy or finality which confers religious quality upon an interest or concern. Thus ultimate concern is the raw material of which religions are made. Here as elsewhere the raw material gets processed in highly distinctive ways before it emerges as actual religion.

(4) There is a final trait which follows from the foregoing three, namely that religious language is holy language. The holy or sacred is a unique emotion which like any unique thing can be indicated but not defined. It is the emotional accompaniment of ultimate meaning; or it is the emotional impact of situations in which ultimate meaning is disclosed and perceived. And therefore it is to be expected that religious language should be accompanied by this emotion. Thus, for example, Ma-

THE RELIGIOUS USE OF LANGUAGE

linowski noted the difference among Melanesians of fairy tales told for the purpose of entertainment or enjoyment, and the tribal myths, recital of which is invariably accompanied by emotions of seriousness, wonder and awe which religion calls the sacred.

We may also note the occurrence of this emotion as an accompaniment of modern secular religious substitutes. The face of the secular liberal frequently goes solemn and awe enters his voice as he tells the story of human intelligence in progressive evolution. So it is also with the Marxists when their myths are recited. It is difficult to the point of impossibility to imagine any existing man for whom literally nothing is sacred.

III

We must now press on to a final question, namely whether there is such a thing as mythical thinking. Is there a significant operation of human reason in religious language, or is this rather a wilderness of emotion unpenetrated by rationality?

It must be frankly admitted that thought moves more slowly and haltingly, and less certainly in this field than, say, in the physical sciences. There are enormously more variables to handle here than in the sciences, and there is notably less control of them. But the biggest difference between science and religion lies in the relation of mind to its object. In scientific thinking the mind is able to assume the position of detached observer, while in religious cognition mind is involved or engaged deeply in what it seeks to know and express. The difference is that between a spectator and a participant. There is simply no way open to the human mind to stand off in complete detachment and assess scientifically the issues dealt with in mythical thinking. As Tillich has remarked, one can criticize a religion only from the viewpoint of another religion.

It is also important to point out in this connection that myth is an unavoidable category. Shut out the front door of men's minds it forces entrance through the back door. It does so because myth is that form of thinking which seeks to orient man's existence to that which is absolute or ultimate. Since such a relation or orientation is inescapably given in the human situation, myth is unavoidable. The question is not: Myth or no myth? but rather: Which myth will we have?

This leads us to the conclusion that men do choose among myths. To be sure, they choose not as people selecting oranges from a fruit corner but rather as men standing at a crossroads. It is also a fact that some men choose arbitrarily, capriciously or irrationally. But it is our contention that rational decision or choice is possible in religion. It is also highly desirable not only because man is a rational being, but also because God is the creator of the human intellect and the author of truth.

By rationality in this realm we mean adequacy to the facts of existence as we confront those facts in daily life and action. Facts are in the broadest sense data or

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

"things given." They are what the mind finds and does not make in its encounter with the world. Some empirical philosophies have sought to limit data to sense data. We may agree that sense data have an irreducible reality and importance, but we must resist the view that they alone are facts. In general a fact is something given in the mind's encounter with the world.

As the human mind encounters facts, it organizes them into coherent systems. To be sure, new facts are forever invading our systems of coherence, like meteors from outer space, shattering our systems of coherence and forcing us to rebuild anew. Of such shattering and rebuilding the mind's life consists. In this sense the mind's life is a never-ending search for adequacy.

Adequacy thus means that capacity of an idea to explain a body of facts, to illuminate new facts as they come into view, to predict new facts, — in general to guide man's steps as he walks among the facts of existence. Conversely inadequacy means the presence of internal contradiction or incoherence, or it means that a fact is left dark and unilluminated. The point of stating this conventional realistic epistemology here is to insist that it has application to mythical thinking. What we seek is a mythology which is adequate and not inadequate to the facts of existence as we confront them in daily life and action.

Here we are not concerned to argue for or against any body of mythical or religious statements but rather to formulate the way in which discussion of the issue can rationally take place. The proposal is a modest one, but the issue is momentous, namely the responsibility to be as reasonable as is humanly possible concerning issues of supreme importance.

Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God

PAUL TILLICH

 THE FACT THAT THERE IS so much discussion about the meaning of symbols going on in this country as well as in Europe is a symptom of something deeper. I believe it is a symptom of two things, something negative and something positive. It is a symptom of the fact that we are in a confusion of language in theology and philosophy and related subjects which has hardly been surpassed in any time in history. Words do not communicate to us anymore what they originally did and what they were invented to communicate. This has something to do with the fact that our present culture has no clearing house such as medieval scholasticism was, and Protestant scholasticism in the 17th century at least tried to be, and philosophers like Kant tried to renew. We have no such clearing house and this is the one point in which I am in sympathy with the present day so-called logical positivists or symbolic logicians or logicians generally. They at least try to produce a clearing house. My only criticism is that this clearing house is a very small room, perhaps only a corner of a house, and not a real house. It excludes most of life. But it could become useful if it increased in reach and acceptance of realities beyond the mere logical calculus. The second point which I want to make is that we are in a process in which a very important thing is being rediscovered: namely, that there are levels of reality of great difference, and that these different levels demand different approaches and different languages: that not everything in reality can be grasped by the language which is most adequate for mathematical sciences; the insight into this situation is the most positive side of the fact that the problem of symbols is taken seriously again.

I

I want to proceed in my own presentation with the intention of clearing concepts as far as I am able. And in order to do this I want to make five steps, the first of which is the discussion of "symbols and signs." Symbols are similar to signs in one decisive respect: both symbols and signs point beyond themselves to something else. The typical sign, for instance the red light of the corner of the street, does not point to itself but it points to the necessity of cars stopping. And every symbol points beyond itself to a reality for which it stands. In this, symbols and signs have an essential identity—they point beyond themselves. And this is the reason that the confusion of language with which I started this lecture has also conquered the discussion about symbols for centuries and has produced confusion between signs and symbols. The first step in any clearing up of the meaning of symbols is to distinguish it from the meaning of signs.

The difference which I see as a fundamental difference between them is that signs do not participate in any way in the reality and power of that to which they

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THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

point. Symbols, although they are not the same as that which they symbolize, participate in its meaning and power. The difference between symbol and sign is the participation in the symbolized reality which characterizes the symbols, and the non-participation in the "pointed-to" reality which characterizes a sign. For example, letters of the alphabet as they are written, an "A" or an "R" do not participate in the sound to which they point; on the other hand, the flag participates in the power of the king or the nation for which it stands and which it symbolizes. There has, therefore, been a fight since the days of William Tell as to how to behave in the presence of the flag. This would be meaningless if the flag did not participate as a symbol in the power of that which it symbolizes. The whole monarchic idea is itself entirely ununderstandable, if you do not understand that the king always is both: on the one hand, a symbol of the power of the group of which he is the king and on the other hand, he who exercised partly (never fully, of course) this power.

But something has happened which is very dangerous for all our attempts to find a clearing house of the concepts of symbols and signs. I have experienced this in three seminars which I have had in Columbia University with my philosophical colleagues there. The mathematician has usurped the term "symbol" for mathematical "sign," and this makes a disentanglement of the confusion almost impossible. The only thing we can do is to distinguish different groups, signs which are called symbols, and genuine symbols. The mathematical signs are signs which are wrongly called symbols. Let me again say something about language. Language is a very good example of the difference between signs and symbols. Words in a language are signs for a meaning which they express. The word "desk" is a sign which points to something quite different—namely, the thing on which my paper is lying here and at which I am looking and which hides me partly from you. This has nothing to do with the word "desk", with these four letters. But there are words in every language which are more than this, and in the moment in which they get connotations which go beyond something to which they point as signs, then they can become symbols; and this is a very important distinction for every speaker. He can speak almost completely in signs, reducing the meaning of his words almost to mathematical signs, and this is the absolute ideal of the logical positivist. The other pole of this is the liturgical or the poetic language where words have a power through centuries, or more than centuries. They have connotations in situations in which they appear so that they cannot be replaced. They have become not only signs pointing to a meaning which is defined, but also symbols standing for a reality in the power of which they participate.

II

Now I come to my second consideration dealing with the functions of symbols. The first function is implied in what I have already said—namely, the representative function. The symbol represents something which is not itself, for which it stands and in the power and meaning of which it participates. This is a basic func-

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

tion of every symbol, and therefore, if that word had not been used in so many other ways, one could perhaps even translate "symbolic" as "representative," but for some reason that is not possible. If the symbols stand for something which they are not, then the question is, "Why do we not have that for which they stand directly? Why do we need symbols at all?" And now I come to something which is perhaps the main function of the symbol—namely, the opening up of levels of reality which otherwise are hidden and cannot be grasped in any other way.

Every symbol opens up a level of reality for which non-symbolic speaking is inadequate. Let me interpret this or explain this in terms of artistic symbols. I resisted for many years the temptation to call works of art symbolic for the simple reason that there is a special artistic style which we call symbolic and which produces only bad works of art. For this reason I disliked the idea of saying that works of art are symbolic. But in the meantime, the more I tried to enter into the meaning of symbols, the more I was convinced that it was a function of art to open up levels of reality; in poetry, in visual art, and in music, levels of reality are opened up which can be opened up in no other way. Now if this is the function of art, then certainly artistic creations have symbolic character. You can take that which a landscape of Rubens, for instance, mediates to you. You can not have this experience in any other way than through this painting made by Rubens. This landscape has some heroic character; it has character of balance, of colors, of weights, of values, and so on. All this is very external. What this mediates to you cannot be expressed in any other way than through the painting itself. The same is true also in the relationship of poetry and philosophy. The temptation may often be to confuse the issue by bringing too many philosophical concepts into a poem. Now this is really the problem; one cannot do this. If one uses philosophical language or scientific language, it does not mediate the same thing which is mediated in the use of really poetic language without a mixture of any other language. This example may show what I mean by the phrase "opening up of levels of reality." But in order to do this, something else must be opened up—namely, levels of the soul, levels of our interior reality. And they must correspond to the levels in exterior reality which are opened up by a symbol. So every symbol is two-edged. It opens up reality and it opens up the soul. Here I could give the same example—namely, the artistic experience. There are people who are not opened up by music, or who are not opened up by poetry, or more of them (mostly in Protestant America) who are not opened up at all by visual arts. The "opening up" is a two-sided function—namely, reality in deeper levels and the human soul in special levels.

If this is the function of symbols then it is obvious that symbols cannot be replaced by other symbols. Every symbol has a special function which is just *it* and cannot be replaced by more or less adequate symbols. This is different from signs, for signs can always be replaced. If one finds that a green light is not so expedient as perhaps a blue light (this is not true, but could be true), then we simply put on

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

a blue light, and nothing is changed. But a symbolic word (such as the word "God") cannot be replaced. No symbol can be replaced when used in its special function. So one asks rightly, "How do symbols arise, and how do they come to an end?" As different from signs, symbols are born and die. Signs are consciously invented and removed. This is a fundamental difference. "Out of which womb are symbols born?" I would say out of the womb which is usually called today the "group unconscious" or "collective unconscious," or whatever you want to call it—out of a group which acknowledges, in this thing, this word, this flag, or whatever it may be, its own being. It is not invented intentionally; and even if somebody would try to invent a symbol, as sometimes happens, then it becomes a symbol only if the unconscious of a group says "yes" to it. It means that something is opened up by it in the sense which I have just described. Now this implies further that in the moment in which this inner situation of the human group to a symbol has ceased to exist, then the symbol dies. The symbol does not "say" anything any more. In this way, all of the polytheistic gods have died; the situation in which they were born, has changed or does not exist any more, and so the symbols died. But these are events which cannot be described in terms of intention and invention.

III

Now I come to my third consideration—namely, the nature of religious symbols. Religious symbols do exactly the same thing as all symbols do—namely, they open up a level of reality, which otherwise is not opened at all, which is hidden. I would call this the depth dimension of reality itself, the dimension of reality which is the ground of every other dimension and every other depth, and which therefore, is not one level beside the others but is the fundamental level, the level below all other levels, the level of being itself, or the ultimate power of being. Religious symbols open up the experience of the dimension of this depth in the human soul. If a religious symbol has ceased to have this function, then it dies. And if new symbols are born, they are born out of a changed relationship to the ultimate ground of being, i. e., to the Holy.

The dimension of ultimate reality is the dimension of the Holy. And so we can also say, religious symbols are symbols of the Holy. As such they participate in the holiness of the holy according to our basic definition of a symbol. But participation is not identity; they are not themselves *the* Holy. The wholly transcendent transcends every symbol of the Holy. Religious symbols are taken from the infinity of material which the experienced reality gives us. Everything in time and space has become at some time in the history of religion a symbol for the Holy. And this is naturally so, because everything that is in the world we encounter rests on the ultimate ground of being. This is the key to the otherwise extremely confusing history of religion. Those of you who have looked into this seeming chaos of the history of religion in all periods of history from the earliest primitives to the latest developments in California, will be extremely confused about the chaotic character of this

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

development. But the key which makes order out of this chaos is comparatively simple. And the key is that everything in reality can impress itself as a symbol for a special relationship of the human mind to its own ultimate ground and meaning. So in order to open up the seemingly closed door to this chaos of religious symbols, one simply has to ask, "Which is the relationship to the ultimate which is symbolized in these symbols?" And then they cease to be meaningless; and they become, on the contrary, the most revealing creations of the human mind, the most genuine ones, the most powerful ones, those who control the human consciousness, and perhaps even more the unconsciousness, and have therefore this tremendous tenacity which is characteristic of all religious symbols in the history of religion.

Religion, as everything in life, stands under the law of ambiguity, "ambiguity" meaning that it is creative and destructive at the same time. Religion has its holiness and its unholiness, and the reason for this is obvious from what I have said about religious symbolism. Religious symbols point symbolically to that which transcends all of them. But since, as symbols, they participate in that to which they point, they always have the tendency (in the human mind, of course) to replace that to which they are supposed to point, and to become ultimate in themselves. And in the moment in which they do this, they become idols. All idolatry is nothing else than the absolutizing of symbols of the Holy, and making them identical with the Holy itself. In this way, for instance, holy persons can become god. Ritual acts can take on unconditional validity, although they are only expressions of a special situation. In all sacramental activities of religion, in all holy objects, holy books, holy doctrines, holy rites, you find this danger which I like to call demonization. They become demonic in the moment in which they become elevated to the unconditional and ultimate character of the Holy itself.

IV

Now I come to my fourth consideration—namely the levels of religious symbols. I distinguish two fundamental levels in all religious symbols: the transcendent level, the level which goes *beyond* the empirical reality we encounter, and the immanent level, the level which we find *within* the encounter with reality. Let us first look at the first level, the transcendent level. The basic symbol on the transcendent level would be God himself. But we cannot simply say that God is a symbol. We must always say two things about him: we must say that there is a non-symbolic element in our image of God—namely that he is ultimate reality, being itself, ground of being, power of being; and the other, that he is the highest being in which everything that we have does exist in the most perfect way. If we say this we have in our mind the image of a highest being, a being with the characteristics of highest perfection. That means we have a symbol for that which is not symbolic in the idea of God—namely "Being Itself." It is important, and I think more than important, to distinguish these two elements in the idea of God. Thus all of these discussions going on about God being a person or not a person, God being similar to other

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

beings or not similar, these discussions which have a great impact on the destruction of the religious experience through false interpretations of it, could be overcome if we would say, "Certainly the awareness of something unconditional is in itself what it is, is not symbolic." We can call it "*Being Itself*," *esse qua esse, esse ipsum*, as the scholastics did. But in our relationship to this ultimate we symbolize and must symbolize. We could not be in communication with God if he were only "ultimate being." But in our relationship to him we encounter him with the highest of what we ourselves are, *person*. And so in the symbolic form of speaking about him, we have both that which transcends infinitely our experience of ourselves as persons, and that which is so adequate to our being persons that we can say, "Thou" to God, and can pray to him. And these two elements must be preserved. If we preserve only the element of the unconditional, then no relationship to God is possible. If we preserve only the element of the ego-thou relationship, as it is called today, we lose the element of the divine—namely, the unconditional which transcends subject and object and all other polarities. This is the first point on the transcendent level.

The second is the qualities, the attributes of God, whatever you say about him: that he is love, that he is mercy, that he is power, that he is omniscient, that he is omnipresent, that he is almighty and all this. These attributes of God are taken from experienced qualities we have ourselves. They cannot be applied to God in the literal sense. If this is done, it leads to an infinite amount of absurdities. This again is one of the reasons for the destruction of religion through wrong communicative interpretation of it. And again the symbolic character of these qualities must be maintained consistently. Otherwise, every speaking about the divine becomes absurd.

A third element on the transcendent level is the acts of God. For instance, when we say, "He has created the world," "He has sent his son," "He will fulfill the world." In all these temporal, causal, and other expressions we speak symbolically of God. And I would like here to give an example in which the four main categories of our finitude are combined in *one* small sentence: "*God has sent his son*." Here we have in the word "has" temporality. But God is beyond *our* temporality, though not beyond every temporality. Here is space; "sending somebody" means moving him from one place to another place. This certainly is speaking symbolically, although spatiality is in God as an element in his creative ground. We say that he "has sent," that meant that he has caused something. In this way God is subject to the category of causality. And when we speak of him and his Son, we have two different substances and apply the category of substance to him. Now all this, if taken literally, is absurd. If it is taken symbolically, it is a profound expression, the ultimate Christian expression, of the relationship between God and man in the Christian experience. But to distinguish these two kinds of speech, the non-symbolic and the symbolic, in such a point is so important that if we are not able to make understandable to our contemporaries that we speak symbolically when we use such language, they will rightly turn away from us, as from people who live still in absurdities and superstitions.

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Now consider the immanent level, the level of the appearances of the divine in time and space. Here we have first of all the incarnations of the divine, different beings in time and space, divine beings transmuted into animals or men or any kinds of other beings as they appear in time and space. This is often forgotten by those within Christianity who like to use in every second theological proposition the word, "incarnation." They forget that this is not an especially Christian characteristic, because incarnation is something which happens in paganism all the time. The divine beings always incarnate in different forms. That is very easy in paganism. This is not the real distinction between Christianity and other religions. Let me say something here, about the relationships of the transcendent to the immanent level just in connection with the incarnation idea. Historically, one must say that preceding both of them was the situation in which the transcendent and immanent were not distinguished. In the Indonesian doctrine of "Mana," that divine mystical power which permeates all reality, we have some divine presence which is both immanent in everything as a hidden power, and at the same time transcendent, something which can be grasped only through very difficult ritual activities known to the priest. Out of this identity of the immanent and the transcendent the gods of the great mythologies have developed in Greece and in the Semitic nations and in India. There we find incarnations as the immanent element of the divine. The more transcendent the gods become, the more incarnations of personal or sacramental character are needed in order to overcome the remoteness of the divine which develops with the strengthening of the transcendent element.

And from this follows the second element in the immanent religious symbolism namely, the sacramental. The sacramental is nothing else than some reality becoming the bearer of the Holy in a special way and under special circumstances. In this sense, the Lord's Supper, or better the materials in the Lord's Supper, are symbolic. Now you will ask perhaps, "only symbolic?" That sounds as if there were something more than symbolic namely, "literal." But the literal is not more but less than symbolic. If we speak of those dimensions of reality which we cannot approach in any other way than by symbols, then symbols are not used in terms of "only" but in terms of that which is necessary, of that which we *must* apply. Sometimes, because of nothing more than the confusion of signs with symbols, the phrase "only a symbol" means "only a sign." And then the question is justified. "Only a sign?" "No." The sacrament is not only a sign. And in the famous discussion between Luther and Zwingli, in Marburg in 1529, it was just this point on which the discussion was held. Luther wanted to maintain the genuinely symbolic character of the elements, but Zwingli said that the sacramental materials, bread and wine, are "only symbolic." Thus Zwingli meant that they are only signs pointing to a story of the past. Even in that period there was semantic confusion. And let us not be misled by this. In the real sense of symbol, the sacramental materials are symbols. But if the symbol is used as *only* symbol (i.e., only signs), then of course the sacramental materials are more than this.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Then there is the third element on the immanent level. Many things, like special parts of the church building, like the candles, like the water at the entrance of the Roman Church, like the cross in all churches, especially Protestant churches, were originally only signs, but in use became symbols. I call them sign-symbols, signs which have become symbols.

V

And now I come to my last consideration—namely, the truth of religious symbols. Here I must distinguish a negative, a positive, and an absolute statement. First the negative statement. Symbols are independent of any empirical criticism. You cannot kill a symbol by criticism in terms of natural sciences or in terms of historical research. As I said, symbols can only die if the situation in which they have been created has passed. Symbols are not on a level on which empirical criticism can dismiss them. I will give you two examples, both connected with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as Holy Virgin. Here you have first of all a symbol which has died in Protestantism by the changed situation of the relation to God. The special, direct, immediate relationship to God, makes any mediating power impossible. Another reason which has made this symbol disappear is the negation of the ascetic element which is implied in the glorification of virginity. And as long as the Protestant religious situation lasts it cannot be reestablished. It has not died because Protestant scholars have said, "Now there is no empirical reason for saying all this about the Holy Virgin." There certainly is not, but this the Roman Church also knows. But the Roman Church sticks to it on the basis of its tremendous symbolic power which step by step brings her nearer to Trinity itself, especially in the development of the last decade. If this should ever be completed as is now discussed in groups of the Roman Church, Mary would become co-Saviour with Jesus. Then, whether this is admitted or not, she is actually taken into the divinity itself. Another example is the story of the virginal birth of Jesus. This is from the point of view of historical research a most obviously legendary story, unknown to Paul and to John. It is a late creation, trying to make understandable the full possession of the divine Spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. But again its legendary character is not the reason why this symbol will die or has died in many groups of people, in even quite conservative groups within the Protestant churches. The reason is different. The reason is that it is theologically quasi-heretical. It takes away one of the fundamental doctrines of Chalcedon, viz., the classical Christian doctrine that the full humanity of Jesus must be maintained beside his whole divinity. A human being who has no human father has no full humanity. This story, then has to be criticized on inner-symbolic grounds, but not on historical grounds. This is the negative statement about the truth of religious symbols. Their truth is their adequacy to the religious situation in which they are created, and their inadequacy to another situation is their untruth. In the last sentence both the positive and the negative statement about symbols are contained. Only a few words about the absolute statement about the

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

truth of religious symbols. I said that religion is ambiguous and that every religious symbol may become idolatrous, may be demonized, may elevate itself to ultimate validity although nothing is ultimate but the ultimate itself; no religious doctrine and no religious ritual may be. I believe that if Christianity claims to have a truth superior to any other truth in its symbolism, then it is the symbol of the cross in which this is expressed, the cross of the Christ. He who himself embodies the fullness of the divine's presence sacrifices himself in order not to become an idol, another god beside God, a god into whom the disciples wanted to make him. And therefore the decisive story is the story in which he accepts the title "Christ" when Peter offers it to him. He accepts it under the one condition that he has to go to Jerusalem to suffer and to die; that means to deny the idolatrous tendency even with respect to himself. This is at the same time the criterion of all other symbols, and it is the criterion to which every Christian church should subject itself.

The Necessity of Faith

JOSEPH SITTLER

LIT TRIED MY BEST so to read the printed subject that was sent to me, "The Necessity of Faith," to make it read, "The Necessity *for* Faith." If it could have been made to read *that* way I would have been offered an homilectical opportunity to which I would have risen like a Minnesota pickerel! But no matter how hard I looked at it, there is was—"The Necessity of Faith," and I felt it therefore rather obligatory that I do what I was asked to do and talk on the subject as stated. And the harder I looked at it the more I saw that a first task must be to analyze the proposition. Such an analysis ought to provide the occasion to make certain other propositions with which I am certain, following the luncheon today with my colleagues, we will have a happy time.

The second introductory statement I must make is that I think it is sporting that a man should announce his assumptions—concede that he does not carry within himself the entire corpus of the Christian tradition and admit that within this mighty home he lives within a particular house. And, therefore, I have assumed as follows: These are called "Christian Conversations," and I am not talking about religion or of religiousness in general, or about faith in general; I want to talk about faith as it is understood within the Christian tradition. Second, I stand within the Reformed tradition, and within that Reformed tradition, a Lutheran. I have announced this not because I am either boasting or ashamed of it, but because it establishes the clear position from which I speak.

I

It is necessary to analyze the topic that has been chosen so as to define what is the purpose of this hour. These afternoons are supposed to be in the nature of conversations. The *sine qua non* of a useful and fructifying conversation is that all parties to it have a consensus about primary terms. The three terms that are used in this phrase are all capable of various interpretations, and if we place these alternatives clearly before us and then state in precisely what sense each one is understood in the paper that opens the discussion there will follow, we hope, not perhaps agreement, but useful because clarifying conversation.

Therefore, I begin with certain observations about the word, *faith*, in order to excise the particularity of Christian faith and define what it means as over and against other legitimate but not at this moment proper uses of the word in the context of this conversation. By the word, *faith*, we commonly mean religious faith; and by religious faith in general we usually mean an acknowledgment of and some

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THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

degree of effective relationship to a super-individual reality. If one sustains within his life this relationship, then he believes himself to maintain a relationship of faith. That to which one is so related need not be a holy someone or a holy purpose. This thing to which one relates himself in faith may be but an aspect of individual or community consciousness, for instance, sensitivity, or sympathy, or any constant which he believes good and which he finds pervasive in the history of human behavior, like openness to a community. What one calls faith in a general religious sense may be but confidence in the sheer value of human aspiration—aspiration toward moral achievement which is beyond any which at the moment has been arrived at.

If some of you have been reading the series of syndicated articles, "This I Believe", you will have observed that the words *faith* and *belief* are so widely used that one gets the impression that if this tent of the word *faith* covers all the various things in which people say they believe, then obviously the word *faith* has lost all precision. That may even be called *faith* in God which by analysis turns out to have a non-Christian content. God, that is, may be a name given to what Santayana called "animal *faith*"—a vital consciousness of a continuity and a dependability which is based upon no other ground than the observations of the regularities and creativities of all-sustaining nature. What Santayana calls "animal *faith*", and for the object of which he sometimes uses the word "God", may be completely devoid of everything that the Christian tradition has meant by *faith*.

Or there is another option: one uses the term "philosophical *faith*." This is commonly used to indicate that service to the religious impulse which is done by certain philosophical surmises. That is, when a theologian or a person with a religious bent uses the term, "philosophical *faith*", they indicate that aspect of the philosophical enterprise which seems to second the motion of the religious impulse or to give some support to religious surmises. This philosophical *faith* is generally of an idealistic kind. If, for instance, one is persuaded that idealism gives a satisfying explanation of the nature of things so that goodness, and beauty, and truth, etc., are realities in which men to a greater or lesser degree participate, this assumption may do service for what in another person may only be adequately supplied by a thorough-going religious *faith*. It may fill the space created by man's desire for adequate and coherent world-order.

II

Now the second word in the title. I wish to point out several ways in which the word, *necessity*, can be used. It is my conviction, as I hope to elaborate in a moment, that the term cannot be used at all about *faith*! Therefore, we have got to make clear, by saying what are the ways in which the word *can* properly be used, the assertion that in this context it ought not be used at all. *Necessity* is a term in logic, first of all. When so used, it indicates that an established proposition must, of logical necessity, be followed by another proposition and that the validity of the second is bestowed by the unassailable soundness of the first. Second, the word,

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

necessity, may be used in moral analysis. For instance, when Shakespeare says (and he put this significantly upon the lips of one of the fattest balloons that he ever created), "To thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not be false to any man:"—that is a highly dubious proposition on the empirical face of it. But it is within a context in which the word, *necessity*, has received a popular and accepted meaning. When used in this context the word means to indicate that there are certain values, regularities, sequences, in the mortal moral order. And confidence in this regularity and dependability can be the object of faith, assumed to be derived of necessity from the structure and operation of moral forces. ". . . it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not be false to any man." That is the legitimate and proper use of the word, *necessity*; but such a use is illegitimate when used about Christian faith.

There is a third use of the word that I want to deal with here in order that we may recognize its illegitimate character in this company, and eliminate it. The word faith is sometimes simply a powerful way to give expression to a need. Such is simply a *tactical* use of the word. That is, faith can be used tactically in order to give a powerful expression to a sense of need so that others will be called to support a certain situation or to advance toward a certain goal. Let me illustrate. We ought to attend to this use of the word in this sense very closely, because it is presently being used in that way by devotees of various idolatries which run all the way from patriotism to forms of material production and distribution. Persons use the word as a powerful term to win converts. An analysis, for instance, of what underlies the point of view of the journal, *Christian Economics*, which calls for the necessity of faith, reveals that the real God is a form of organization of society,—and what they want faith for is to support that organization. Religious faith which identifies the historical purposes of God and this form of organization is declared necessary. It is not a logical necessity; it is obviously not a moral necessity. For other forms are thinkable and have actually existed. But the use of the term in this instance is a tactical device.

None of these uses of the word, *faith*, is precise and none of these elaborations of necessity is true to the meaning of the term. For the following reasons: Faith, as I have spoken of it, is but a term loosely used to indicate an activity or a confidence or a relationship, which ought more accurately to be described in other ways. What is indicated by the term as we have now used it is rather (a) an assumption of a value priority, (b) a judgment as to the regularity of an aspect of actuality which gives us confidence towards the future, or (c) a calculated confidence which plays the same role in practical life as a Dun and Bradstreet rating plays in merchandising life. For instance, I heard a Senator (I do believe it was a Senator from Minnesota!) not so long ago, talking about religious faith. As an analogy for faith, he talked about the world of credit. He was appealing, in a lay sermon, for faith in God. Credit is faith! The whole business world understands it, and all use it in the merchandising field. We all operate with faith!

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

Now this is an extremely perilous kind of talk. The extension of credit is a calculated risk. It ought not to be called an act of faith. The stores know jolly well which people pay their bills! A certain company from which I bought something not long ago said that I could charge up to \$100 worth, but not \$200; they know me better than I know myself! This extension of observed regularities of behavior into prognostications about the future is a calculated risk and it ought not to be called faith. The same understanding of the word *necessity* shows that the term is not intelligible if used as a modifier of *faith*. Even the misuse of the term *faith*, as we have considered such misuse, ought not to be connected with the proper use of the word, *necessity*. And a properly concise use of the term, as I hope to show in a moment, would require a term not only of a different, but a completely opposite, order.

III

The constructive part of my task I hope to accomplish by an elaboration of four propositions. First: *The affirmations of faith are faith's affirmations about God. They are, therefore, radically different from all rational metaphysics and cannot be derived from or immediately connected with metaphysical propositions.* Now all I am saying is that affirmations of faith are affirmations of faith! This sounds tautological and, hence, unnecessary! But the history of Christian and other areas in Western thought reveal that again and again this has been ignored. What this proposition seeks to insure is that we keep a clear and clean distinction between the affirmations of metaphysics, which have a legitimacy and a methodology of their own, and the affirmations of faith. Since Christian faith is faith in God who has revealed Himself in Christ, faith has something very definite to say about God. This definiteness, however, and its content, have their foundation in God's disclosure of Himself and nowhere else. They do not rest upon rational demonstration or theoretical or logical argumentation. I am not saying that these affirmations when known and certainly held do not have an influence upon and profound intellectual connections with all areas of inquiry. But they are not conclusions drawn from what can be demonstrated about the world or history or humanity. Faith does not become certain upon the basis of logical proof. From the point of view of man's activity, faith has the character of decision. Its quality is that of audacity or daring. This must be said as over and against rationalism, particularly the rationalism of the last phase of the Enlightenment which is still so powerfully at work among us. The affirmations of faith were simply identified with rational metaphysics. At the same time both theologians and metaphysicians spoke of pure articles and mixed articles. And among these mixed articles of theology (that is, articles that were mixed in that they were derived partly from reason and partly from revelation) were the propositions about God. Thus, metaphysics found a place in the very center of the conception of faith. The result was that faith was confused with supposed theoretical knowledge and the nature of the Christian conception of God was ser-

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

iously obscured. It is the purpose of theology, as I understand it, to understand faith in its particularity; not to prove or establish it, but to understand its nature and claim. Hence, theology contributes both to the categories of philosophical and theological thought when it acknowledges the different character of the affirmations of faith and the affirmations of metaphysics.

The second: *The affirmations of faith are, without exception, of a symbolic character.* Since God is the whole content of Christian faith, and since the expressions which must be used in faith's affirmations about God belong to this world, the affirmations necessarily are of a figurative and symbolic character. God is to faith the Eternal who cannot be contained in the limits of time and space. But, *our* categories do belong within the limits of time and space and they are intelligible only when the limits are recognized and observed. If theology pretends to speak of God in conclusive terms that pretension is a sure sign that the interpretation of faith has become metaphysical and that the God of faith has been changed into an object among other objects. All the words used by faith to designate the being and attributes of God are taken from personal life: love, wrath, the Father. These are all human figures of speech and faith is fully conscious of their symbolic character. They are not, therefore, dispensable terms; on the contrary they convey the very richest treasures.

This situation presents a two-fold temptation. On the one hand, theology may become independent of all figures and seek to make its exposition of the content of faith completely free of all anthropomorphic character. This peril appears in scholastic theology and won there a tremendous, although a dubious, and brief victory. It appears, also, in all efforts to elaborate idealistic philosophy so as to make it adequate for theology. The other peril is that theology itself tends to regard symbolic expressions as adequate definitions. An illustration will clarify what is meant by this assertion. Biblical theology must come to terms with a phrase which no amount of criticism of biblical literature can get rid of, "the wrath of God", an obviously anthropomorphic term. What this term points to, intends, and reminds us of is often rejected because of its figurative and symbolic character. But when this happens something central to the concept of the holiness of God is completely ignored or evaded. Theology must avoid both temptations: the temptation to subsume its particular kind of speech under general metaphysical categories, and hence destroy their particularity, and, on the other side, the temptation to regard its figurative and symbolic ways of expression as definitions which are identical with and at every point logically adequate to their object.

The third affirmation is as follows: *The affirmations of faith are statements about God's revelation or self-disclosure; they do not pretend to speak from within God.* God is to faith, to use the language of older theology, at one and the same time *Deus Revelatus* (the God who has disclosed Himself, but who is in Himself not identical with or exhausted in that revelation) and *Deus Absconditus* (God in

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

the paradoxical form of his revelation, as He is in Himself and not in man's knowledge). God, as He is in Himself, lies beyond any refinement of epistemological methodology or any other approach. But the *Deus Revelatus* is the God who has disclosed His nature and meaning and will. And this is the God with whom theology has to do. The problem is to ask what this means for the affirmations of faith. It is obvious that the idea of the hidden God limits the scope and the ambitions of the affirmations of faith. Faith does not know or see all, nor does it look at the whole of things with the eyes of God, and it makes no such pretension. Faith understands, but it understands in part. It sees, but it, too, sees through the darkened glass. Faith does not have a ready answer to all the problems of the human spirit or to all the issues that arise in human existence. The revelation of God means a revelation of God's character in terms of His will and disposition toward us. And faith does declare a knowledge of that and provides a sure foundation for life. But this does not mean that all obscurity that surrounds and pervades human existence is by such a relationship obliterated. It does not claim that all these obscurities whether known in solitude or in community are evaporated by virtue of the gift of faith. The idea of the *Deus Absconditus*, of the hidden God, simply means for faith that limits must not be transgressed, that God, as He is in Himself, is no possible inquiry even for Christian theology. The term, "the mystery of God", is the New Testament way of putting the matter. That the ultimate victory should be given in an overcome man; that love-dying should be love-victorious, that a death should become the door to life—all of this is the heart of the mystery of God.

But, the word mystery as I am using it here must be disengaged from that popular use whereby we talk about a mystery story. A mystery story is a story the mystery of which is evaporated when we find out who-dunnit. The mystery is no longer a mystery when you get to the last page. It is a mystery which is done away with in the disclosure of that which seemed mysterious because we didn't know the facts. Now, when religious speech uses the term mystery it does not use it to mean that which revelation evaporates or eliminates, but rather it is a pointing to, and an acknowledgment of its inability to master, that which evades all cognitive efforts. A true mystery remains a mystery even in its disclosure. Its salvatory gift can never be transformed into explicatory propositions. For instance when one says that God is love, this affirmation of faith *comprehends* in the sense that it grasps what is offered and lives by it. But this faith understands and comprehends in a way that also acknowledges that this love "passeth knowledge" and "passeth understanding." I comprehend and understand this love when I accept it and live by it; but I do not comprehend it in the sense that I ever understand this kind of love!—which loves the unlovable, the rebellious, and that which scorns it. I have no empirical material on which to say I can understand how God loves the sinner. In that sense the mystery remains a mystery. But the fact of the mystery of God's love becomes an "open mystery" when I accept the fact of it and live by it.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

In the biblical terminology, the miracle (which we usually understand as constituting a nature-problem, a wonder, an inexplicable phenomenon) is not presented to us for that kind of judgment at all. The biblical speech announces miracles as signs advertising the mystery of God. In recent studies, a graduate student at my school undertook to examine the context of all the miracles that are declared to have been done by Christ in order to see if, in the New Testament documents, there is a *vocabulary of response*, a particular terminology which indicates how the men of Jesus' time and place were effected by the miraculous happening. This study found out that the word *Ekstasis* is almost a technical term in the New Testament for the kind of response which is evoked by the mystery of God. Miracle and ecstasy belong together. That is to say, the revelation of the mystery of God is creative, of a *kind of response, which is proper to itself*. The content of the mystery and the content of the response are absolute categories whose integrity belongs to the salvation-drama of the Bible. They are not capable, without distortion and reduction, of being subsumed under non-biblical categories.*

Now the fourth affirmation: *The affirmations of faith have a paradoxical character.* The paradox in the affirmations of faith is not of a temporary character which might be removed by a more refined analysis; it is of the structure of the affirmations. It inheres in the affirmations of faith because these directly or indirectly are affirmations about God. As long as faith asserts the reality of the God who works in history, who is at one and the same time the Eternal and the One who is contemporaneously active in history, then paradox will have to inhere. I can illustrate in this way. How shall faith make an assertion about God who is sovereign and Who, so it is declared, engaged Himself in historic decisions, in battles, and Who, in supreme revelation, died in the struggle? How can faith speak of sin which is declared both as something given and at the same time as personally actualized in my will, except in terms of paradox? I say I have faith in God; and yet I know, at the moment I say that, that I do not have this faith as something that I possess (as I possess a jacket and a handkerchief and a wristwatch) but that I am possessed by this faith. In order to make this double statement, I must use paradoxical language. Luther said it very clearly when he said that the man of faith is always at one and the same time justified man and sinner. Paradox, to be sure, but confirmed in the life of every believer. But these are religious paradoxes; the paradoxes of faith's statements. If one says that God in forgiveness receives the sinner into communion with himself, *that* God does that is a paradoxical act. But is it not a contradiction as a proposition of faith?

IV

Now a concluding word about the certainty of faith. The certainty of faith is not initially a psychological thing; it is a certainty about the revelation of God whereby faith lives. This certainty possesses a witnessing, life-formative character but not a logically demonstrable character. The word, *necessary*, should not be used

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

of it. The idea that it can be based on rational proofs is contrary to the nature of both science and faith. That is why, for instance, biblical theology, within which tradition I operate, can today greet the workers in logical analysis as colleagues and not as enemies. They seek to bring clarity and precision into the use of propositional language. And therefore one who operates with biblical theology, who is concerned to excise the particularity of biblical and one strand of historical theological speech is not thrown into a professional tizzy by the appearance of logical analysis of language. Neither does the certainty of faith possess a pragmatic character. It cannot be certified by citing the significance of faith for other areas of life. And this, it seems to me, is the usual homiletical betrayal of Christian theology—that it tries to certify the reality and the validity of faith by showing it to be useful in other areas of life which have nothing to do with faith. There may be a connection between my relationship to God and the state of my ulcers; but to argue that faith has, therefore, a greater validity is both bad religion and impossible logic. These relationships, to be sure, exist; they are so central and passionate and permeative that the faith-relationship can by no means be locked up within the theological personality but creates an existence for the individual which colors everything that he touches, everything he knows. These relationships are a large part of Western history. The role of faith in culture is discernible and vast. And the fact that I have not talked about it does not mean that I do not know anything about it or enjoy it. But it was not my purpose to point to that today. I am simply trying to say that this kind of pragmatic validation is always a temptation to Christian theology, for it is contrary to the theocentric character of faith and is more apt to confuse than to establish it.

The Difficulties Which the Scientist Experiences In Accepting Theological Statements

PETER ALEXANDER

T IS THE DUTY of a Devil's Advocate to put the opposing case as strongly as possible. It would perhaps be pleasant and exciting if I could arouse the sort of storm for which Nineteenth Century discussions of science and religion are notorious, but I fear that I shall be unable to do this. I hope that I shall not be thought, therefore, to have failed in my task. I am unable to do it because I believe that many of those discussions were mistaken in assuming a conflict where none existed. I do not think that there is, or need be, a serious conflict between science and religion, in the sense that new discoveries in science can threaten the essential beliefs of Christianity. I do not mean that there was a dispute which has been settled in one way or the other, in favour of science or religion, but that it was never a real dispute. There can be no question of refusing to accept, on religious or theological grounds, any established scientific statement, but this need hold no terrors for the theologian since he can consistently accommodate any such statement without being untrue to his faith.

But, it may be asked, if there is no conflict, no real dispute, why should we waste time discussing it? There is a very good reason. There are many people for whom the alleged conflict still seems a real one, and if they can be led to see its unreality, so much the better for both their science and their religion. It may be perennially necessary to deny the conflict, for I suspect that the belief in it survives because people want it to survive. Life is uncomfortable with opponents but dull without them: with vanquished opponents it is both comfortable and glorious.

I had better make clear what I intend to do by first saying what I do not intend to do. I am an unbeliever but have no objection to anyone holding religious beliefs, so I have no desire to show, even if I could, that religious beliefs are untenable. I do not think that they need be dangerous or any sort of opium, although, of course, they may be, like any other important beliefs. The essential difference between a believer and an unbeliever, it seems to me, is that one believes and the other does not. For reasons which I hope will become obvious, I think that there is little that can be done about reconciliation by rational means. I do not wish to give a factual account of the difficulties scientists actually do experience in accepting theological statements, but to consider the difficulties an intelligent and unbiased scientist ought, in my view, to experience. I hope this is not presumptuous of me. I propose mainly to consider the *logic* of scientific and theological statements in general, especially as they involve the notion of evidence.

I. THE ALLEGED CONFLICT

There are three main respects in which science and religion may appear to conflict. One of these is far more fundamental than the other two. I must outline

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THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES

them if only for the sake of making it clear that I am limiting my remarks mainly to this most important respect.

(1) Certain theological statements appear to conflict with certain scientific statements about the date and nature of particular events. Such was the basis of the controversy about the age of the earth and the order of its creation. The account according to the Scriptures is very different from the account according to Hoyle. The theologian cannot, of course, ignore the scientist's account but he can settle the dispute without loss of face by admitting the accuracy of this account and re-interpreting the Scriptures or regarding them, in this respect, as speaking in myth or allegory. It is not essential to Christian belief to hold that the world began in 4004 B. C. This, therefore, need not be a fundamental conflict.

(2) Certain theological statements purport to record, and account for, the occurrence of events which appear to violate established scientific *laws*, as distinct from scientific statements reporting particular events. I refer, especially, to the accounts of miracles. The Virgin Birth, the making of wine from water, and the feeding of the five thousand, taken literally, violate the laws of human conception, chemical composition, and the nutritional requirements of men. I am not sure that the scientist is justified in saying that these things *couldn't* have happened but he may, with justification, say that it is highly improbable that they did. It is clear that the theologian need not stand out for the literal acceptance of these accounts in the face of all opposition. He can deal with them in various ways. Some may be regarded as the result of the carelessness or exuberance of their witnesses and chroniclers, some may be explained in scientific terms on the basis of mechanisms since discovered, and others may be regarded as myths, allegories or parables. It is not essential to Christian belief that miracles be accepted at their face value, so *this* kind of conflict need not be fundamental.

There is a good deal that might be said about these kinds of apparent conflict. Here, I merely wish to emphasize that they may be regarded as being of secondary importance. I do not want to deny that parts of Christian doctrine may have to be revised as science advances, but only that such advances can shake the central beliefs of Christianity. A Christian need not stake everything upon the peripheral beliefs which science can touch, and Christians do, indeed, disagree about them. A man may refuse to accept deductions from the Scriptures about the age of the earth and refuse to accept the miracles, but still remain a Christian.

On the other hand, one cannot remain a Christian and refuse to believe in the Christian God. One cannot remain a Christian while regarding God as a myth, however important a myth. Belief in God's existence, attributes and works are what I mean by the central beliefs of Christianity. This brings me to the third respect in which scientific and theological statements may appear to conflict. This, if it is a conflict, must be a fundamental one.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

(3) Statements about God's existence, attributes and works, and about our knowledge of them, appear to conflict with the scientific account of the world, which attempts to explain everything in mechanical terms. The argument goes something like this. The scientist says that it is theoretically possible to give a complete account of every natural event in scientific terms, an account which begins with, and is always related to, observation by means of the five senses. The Christian replies that this is not enough, for it leaves out the God who created and watches over all this, His love and goodness, His purposes and designs. It fails to see the world as the consequence of the Divine will, love and power, and gives an inaccurate picture of human personality. The scientist, relying on a principle of economy, says, "But every event can be given a naturalistic explanation, which is, or will be, complete and satisfactory, so why import another conception? Why multiply entities beyond necessity? If I can tell you down to the last detail how the watch works, how the spring drives the wheels, what force is necessary, how the balance wheel regulates it, and so on, where is the need to postulate an invisible and intangible goblin to make it go?" To which the Christian is likely to reply, "But this is different. God exists and this at once makes your account incomplete. Your descriptions may be perfectly satisfactory within the scientific context, but don't you see that everything you describe has a meaning and a purpose?" The scientist is inclined to answer, "No, I don't! Moreover, I want to be told how you know that God exists." And the religious person replies, "But don't you see that the very pattern you discover supports the existence of a Divinity with purposes? Don't you see the purpose in the pattern?" And so it goes on.

My dialogue is crude. It could be put much more subtly on both sides, and in much greater detail, but it will serve my purpose. I sketch merely the general lines of the argument. It looks as if there is a real conflict but only, I suggest, because both are mistaken about what is at stake, and so they conduct their argument in misleading terms. It is of the utmost importance to examine the way in which they are misleading for in seeing why the conflict is an unreal one we discover whether there is any genuine disagreement left. There are two fundamental and connected points involved which lead to confusion.

(1) The word "evidence" is used in different senses. The scientist knows what evidence is, knows what counts as evidence, in the scientific context. He makes a mistake if he takes it for granted that this is, self-evidently, the only kind of evidence. The theologian uses the word "evidence" in what is, by scientific standards, an extended sense, and he makes a mistake if he omits to point out, as he usually does, just how it is extended.

(2) Different questions, even questions of logically different kinds, may be framed in the same words, and so may their answers. To understand explanations or descriptions we must be clear that they are answers to questions, and we must know precisely what kinds of questions they are.

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES

I shall discuss these two points in turn and this, I think, will bring out the difficulties for the scientist about which I am enquiring.

II. EVIDENCE

The scientist is concerned to ask questions about the world which is open to our everyday experience through the five senses and to answer them by statements which are testable through these senses. These statements need not, of course, be *directly* testable by such observation: this would rule out statements about perfect gases, protons and electrons, light waves, and so on. They may refer to entities which are in principle (that is, theoretically,) unobservable, as long as every statement is tied down somewhere to observation in such a way that, if the observations were different, some of the theoretical statements would have to be different. Putting it the other way about, no scientific statement may be accepted unless it gives consequences which square with the observed state of affairs; if the observed state of affairs does not correspond with these deduced consequences then the statement must be rejected. A statement in science can only be said to be "true" or "established" if its falsity would make some difference to what we observe. A highly schematized and inaccurate example might be — because the electrons of the sodium atom revolve in certain specified directions, sodium chloride is white. There would be no sense in saying this sort of thing if their revolving in any other direction would also result in sodium chloride being white.

One consequence of this criterion for the acceptance of statements in science is that we can start from agreement upon the facts which have to be described or explained, and we can command agreement at all points in the explanation because it is possible for all of us to do the same deductions and make the same observations. The scientist is thus accepting a criterion of *publicity* and regarding agreement as of the first importance. He may even go too far in this, and expect his rule of science to be a rule governing all statements whatever, although it is by no means self-evident that this should be so.

At this point I must still a criticism which I dimly hear stirring. It may be said that this canon has not always been part of science and that our conception of science may change so that in the future, we may not demand agreement and this rigid reliance upon the five senses. I think this unlikely, but it would be foolish to deny that it might happen. It is, however, irrelevant to my theme. Scientific and theological statements appear to conflict just because science is defined in this way, and this is the apparent conflict we must consider. If science is defined in another way at some other time, there may then be a conflict or there may not. There may not then even appear to be a conflict. We cannot count *that* chicken until we know that it is not a swan.

Now, the point I wish to bring out about evidence may seem trivial but it is not so obvious that people have not been misled about it. The observations from which

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

scientists start, and to which they continually return, form the *evidence* for their established statements, whether these statements are directly testable by observation or only linked to observation by a series of deductions. This fact gives the scientific meaning to "evidence." When we ask for evidence in a scientific context we *mean* observational evidence. Certain observations may count in favour of a scientific statement, others may count against it; the scientist's task is to weigh the favourable against the unfavourable evidence and accept the statement if the favourable largely outweighs the unfavourable. But, what is perhaps more important, all this is involved, I think, in the usual common-sense meaning of "evidence." It is, too, supported by the derivation of the word itself, for what that is worth.

Moreover, both the scientific and the common-sense meanings of the word involve the condition that *A* is evidence for *B* *only if* it is at least theoretically possible to discover *B* in a different way, either by direct observation or through evidence other than *A*. The sound of trumpeting coming from the next room is evidence for the presence of an elephant there, only if we can discover the elephant by some direct method, such as looking or feeling, or collect more evidence for its presence, for instance, by finding footprints or seeing that the hay we put there has vanished. Suppose I claim that this trumpeting is evidence for the presence of an elephant and you look but cannot see it. The following dialogue might ensue.

You: Look, you were wrong, there is no elephant here. I can't see it and there is nowhere for an elephant to hide.

I: Oh, but it's an invisible elephant.

You: But I can't feel it either, and I can walk all over the room unhampered.

I: Ah, no, this elephant is intangible, too.

You: Can it be smelt or heard?

I: It has no smell and the only sound it makes is this trumpeting.

You: I should not like to have to *taste* an elephant!

I: There's no point, this one has no taste.

You: But I've been through all the senses and the only one that is any use here is hearing—and that for one sound only. There are no footprints, nor any other sign of an elephant. Might there be *any* other signs?

I: No, this is the only sign possible—for this sort of elephant.

You: But how do you know that it's not an invisible and intangible trumpet player?

I: But it sounds *exactly* like an elephant.

You: I mean a *very clever* trumpet player.

I: You mean one who can imitate an elephant's trumpeting so that no one can detect the difference?

You: Yes, and now do you say that the trumpeting is evidence for the presence of such an elephant, *rather than* for the presence of such a trumpet player?

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES

I: No, I suppose not.

You: Then it isn't evidence for either, is it?

At which point I change the subject or simply affirm my belief in the elephant's presence in spite of the lack of evidence. And *you*, of course, would be right. Unless there is some other, independent, evidence which it is at least theoretically possible to obtain, there is no sense, according to the scientific and ordinary common-sense usage, in calling the trumpeting evidence for the presence of an elephant. This is supported by the use of circumstantial evidence in the courts. The assumption underlying its use is that if there can be evidence then there *could* have been eye-witnesses, even if in fact there happened to be none.

These two elements in the usual meaning of "evidence" lie behind the question which I earlier supposed the scientist to ask the theologian—"How do you know there is a God, a Being with those special attributes you ascribe to God?" The scientist regards reference to observation and the possibility of independent checking as involved in the *meaning* of "evidence," can, as a scientist, admit only one ultimate way of getting to know things, namely, through observation. The theologian appears to be claiming some other means of getting to know things, and claiming a kind of evidence which fails to conform to the scientific criteria. Scientists sometimes go even farther than this and hold that, in the last resort, all knowledge must be based on observation and that there is only one meaning of "evidence," the scientific meaning, so that the Christian appears to be claiming knowledge which, in consequence, he could not have. Such a scientist sees the conflict as concerning the way in which knowledge is to be obtained and what "evidence" means.

This is a little extravagant, but, up to a point he is justified, for in our normal everyday experience we do rely very heavily on these criteria for knowledge and evidence. Moreover, they have a clear and unambiguous meaning which we all, in certain contexts, accept. Where he is wrong, it seems to me, is in *assuming* that there are no other ways of obtaining what may sensibly be called "knowledge," and that there is no other permissible use of the word "evidence." In the face of claims to the contrary by intelligent people, this is something which cannot be assumed but must be shown.

On the other hand, since we all use and understand these words in this sense, whereas not everyone sees the point of using them in other senses, it might justly be argued that the onus is on those who *do* see the point to explain it. That is, the theologian who sees himself as the opponent of this hard-headed scientific view may be at fault for seeming to use "knowledge" and "evidence" in their ordinary senses, but covertly breaking the rules of these senses.

Consider the sort of thing that is sometimes said about evidence in the theological context. "The design and organization we find in the world is evidence for the existence of the Christian God." "If you look at it in the right frame of

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

mind, the pattern looks purposeful. This is evidence for the existence of a creator with purposes." "The facts the scientist describes have a meaning—they are signs of the existence of a Divine Being." "As I go about my daily tasks I meet a Person in every situation." Now there are two important things to notice here. First, it is not that *some* facts, *some* features of the pattern, are evidence for and others evidence against the existence of God. *Any* fact will do, *any* kind of pattern. It is the pattern as a whole that counts, or rather, the fact that there *is* a pattern. We are not asked to weigh the evidence and conclude that the balance in favour indicates a slight or a high probability that God exists. This is not how it works at all, and this is where it is not like evidence in the usual sense. What we have to do is, Pangloss-like, to show how apparently conflicting evidence can be reconciled with belief in a Divinely created and guided world.

This is shown by the kind of problem which is presented by pain and evil, and the way in which it is treated. The existence of pain and evil in the world has presented a problem for the *convinced* Christian but has not, I think, usually been regarded by him as evidence against the existence of God, to be weighed against the existence of goodness as positive evidence. The problem, for him, is to fit them into a universe which was created by such a God. It is a foregone conclusion that this can be done because of God's characteristics; the problem concerns *how* it is to be done. According to the normal canons of evidence, if the presence of goodness in the world is evidence for the existence of God, then the presence of evil is evidence against. That neither is being used as evidence, in the usual sense, is shown by the fact that no one could have done the necessary sum and, as far as I know, no one has tried. Few Christians would, I think, stake their belief in God upon their finding that there was more goodness in the world than evil, more good men than bad, or that bad men can be reformed.

Imagine that the following point were put to a convinced Christian. "Suppose the pattern were much less clear and simple than it is, suppose there were much less regularity than we find, would this make the existence of God less probable?" The convinced Christian would surely answer "No". He would say something about God working in a mysterious way, that His ways might be inscrutable to most men, or most of the time to all men, and that if the world were different in these ways it would simply mean that His purposes would be different and more difficult to discover, but that He nevertheless existed and had purposes. His essential characteristics need not be altered. This makes it clear that these facts are not being used as evidence although they are often spoken about as if they were.

Moreover, if "evidence" were being used in its ordinary sense, there would be some other, independent, way of checking up on the existence of God. We cannot deal with this in the way it is dealt with in science, saying, for instance, that the possibility of finding an elephant's footprints allows us to say that the trumpeting is evidence for the elephant's presence or, in general, that what we hear is

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES

evidence if it can be supported by some other sense experience. For, as I have said, it is not this or that feature of the pattern that is relevant to God's existence; it is the pattern as a whole, the fact that there is a pattern. The whole pattern is one piece of (query) evidence. So the other, independent ways of checking which will allow us to call this "evidence" can only be through some radically different channel, such as revelation. I am not concerned to deny that revelation is possible, has occurred or is infallible. Intelligent people claim revelations and I am in no position to dispute the claim. I am concerned only with their privacy. Such ways of checking are, and must be, different in kind from those usually associated with evidence. This, again, is a consequence of the way in which God is conceived. He is *defined* as inaccessible to the five senses in the way, acceptable to science, in which elephants and chairs, clouds and stars are accessible. I can be shown an elephant or a star but not, except in a metaphorical and indirect sense, God. I can be introduced to your next door neighbor but not to the Person you meet in your study of chemical reactions. God is like an invisible and intangible elephant except that He doesn't trumpet. Although direct experiences of God are claimed, we do not all appear to have them. We have to be, as is often said, receptive and in the right frame of mind and this is an all-important reservation.

To the unbelieving scientist, all this looks like "cooking" the evidence. It looks to him as if the facts of the natural world, especially the inconvenient ones, are being explained away instead of being weighed in the balance, and yet (some of them) being claimed as evidence. If *he* comes across adverse evidence, he points out, this would make him think again about the hypothesis he was trying to establish. He would at least have to modify it. But the assertion of God's existence is not a hypothesis in this sense for it is broad enough to accommodate any fact, so no fact is relevant to its falsification. But the test of the scientific respectability of a hypothesis is that it should be in principle capable of falsification. We should at least be able to specify what would, if we found it, count against the hypothesis. But the only modification which the theologian *need* ever make is in his account of the precise relation *between* the facts of the world and the nature of God. The nature of God need never be modified in the face of the facts. Moreover, the scientist may well be puzzled when, the facts being regarded as evidence, he asks for some other means of testing God's existence and is told, as he may be, about revelation, the mystical experiences of a favoured few, which experiences, unfortunately, are private and, usually, indescribable. This fails to comply with his normal requirement that experiences used in evidence shall be public and describable.

"But" he may be told, "you can do something about it. It is possible to see all the facts with which you deal in your scientific work as the manifestation of God's purposes, goodness and love." "How?" he hopefully enquires. "By looking at them in the right frame of mind" comes the disheartening reply. For, in truth, admission to the spectacle is by ticket only and, although tickets are always available, the price

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

of the ticket is *belief*. This is the crux of the whole difficulty about evidence, for here we have an alleged kind of evidence which looks like evidence only if one already believes. We are sometimes warned against looking for the wrong kind of evidence in the wrong way. But we can only look in the right way, only, that is, see the facts *as* evidence, if we already have the belief. The acceptance of the existence of God is the first essential; once we accept it, all we see fortifies it. If we do not have the belief, no multiplication or combination of ordinary facts is logically powerful enough to compel it, even if, sometimes, it may be psychologically powerful enough. But this is not what "evidence" means, and the scientist may well be puzzled by the claim that all the ordinary facts he deals with are evidence for the existence of the Christian God. He expects them logically to support it in the way they support, say, the atomic theory and then finds that this is not the way it works.

Both sides are at fault. The theologian for using the word "evidence", or other words which imply that he is concerned with evidence, and at the same time failing to comply with the canons of evidence, or, if he sees that a different kind of evidence is meant, for failing to say how it differs. The scientist is at fault if he does not notice that the canons of evidence are different here, or, if he notices this and thinks it self-evident that his use of evidence is the only possible use.

I have not been arguing to the conclusion that one side is right and the other wrong, but that there are no sides. Once it is clear that the conceptions of evidence are radically different, it is clear that there is no real dispute. If I continue to assert that the trumpeting is evidence for the existence of an invisible and intangible elephant, I have accepted criteria of evidence different from the scientific criteria, and, in consequence, have put myself outside science, am not talking as a scientist, so cannot be disputing any of the conclusions of science. If there is any dispute it can only be about the way in which "evidence" may be permissibly used, not in science, but anywhere. Invisible and intangible elephants which give no signs of their presence except trumpeting just are not scientific subjects; no assertion or denial of their presence conflicts with anything in science. When we have seen how different are the conceptions of evidence in the two fields, how different is the relation of the two kinds of evidence to the statements they purport to establish, we see that these statements are of different logical orders and so could not possibly conflict. As Professor Ryle has said, in another connection, "The wicket-keeper neither revokes nor follows suit; he neither buys nor sells; he neither convicts nor lets off with a caution. He is in another line of business." The scientist and the theologian are not proposing rival answers to the same question but different answers to different questions, questions of different kinds. *They* are in different lines of business.

This brings me to my second main point, that concerning the misleading way in which different questions and their answers may be stated in the same words.

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES

III. DIFFERENT QUESTIONS

The Red Queen, you may remember, asked Alice, "How is bread made?"

"I know *that!*" Alice cried eagerly. "You take some flour. . ."

"Where do you pick the flower?" the White Queen asked. "In a garden, or in the hedges?"

"Well, it isn't *picked* at all," Alice explained: "It's ground. . ."

"How many acres of ground?" said the White Queen. "You mustn't leave out so many things."

In just such a way, the words in which question are framed may mislead us as to the nature of the questions. Let me give two examples which illustrate my point more precisely.

(1) A train is due out at nine-fifteen. At nine o'clock a ticket collector asks a porter, "Is anyone on the platform?" The porter answers "No" and that means that the platform is empty of passengers.

(2) The captain and coach of a football team are looking for the rest of the team at the station, having arranged to meet them there. They are afraid that they may miss their train. The captain asks "Is anyone on the platform?" and the coach may truthfully answer "No" even though the platform is seething with other, irrelevant passengers.

Here, the same words are used for both questions and for both answers, yet the questions and answers are clearly quite different. To discover this we have to look at the contexts or encourage the speakers to elaborate their meanings. If, in the second example, the porter had been asked the question, without knowledge of the context, he would have answered "Yes" and, then, without further enquiry we might suppose that we had been given conflicting answers to the same question and that one of them must be wrong.

In a similar way, the question, "Why did he give that money to charity instead of buying things he badly needs?" looks like a single question, but the contexts in which it may be asked and the ways in which it may be answered show that it may contain several questions of logically different kinds. Some of the ways in which it may be answered are these.

(1) We may give a causal answer in terms of physical conditions in the brain and environmental influences upon the person now or in early childhood.

(2) We may speak about his motives, for example, his desire to help other people or to be respected as a charitable man by his fellows.

(3) We may talk of a Divine Spark informing the human personality, the fundamental goodness of man consequent upon the goodness of God.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

That these are different answers is shown by the form of words: that they are answers of logically different kinds to different kinds of questions is shown by the ways in which they would be supported; the first, by reference to various scientific laws established by observing human behaviour, brain activity, and so on, under influences of this or that kind; the second, by pointing to other behaviour of this man which exhibits, perhaps, disinterested sympathy or ambition, and by reference to our experience of our own motives of this kind; the third, by reference to a body of theological doctrine based upon a belief in a God of a specified kind. Because the answers are of logically different kinds, because they are answers to different questions, they are not, and could not be, conflicting answers to the same question. The kind of answers which *would* conflict with the first would point to different influences of the same sort, discovered in a similar way; the kind of answer which would conflict with the second would point to, say, jealousy instead of sympathy or ambition; the third answer would be denied by simply denying the presence of a Divine Spark in men, or by saying that this act depended not upon this but upon some lower element in the man's nature, or by basing an answer upon a different body of theological doctrine.

Here again, one who failed to see that different questions were contained in the same form of words might make the mistake of thinking that the different answers conflicted. Both scientists and theologians have made this mistake. When the scientist asks questions about the world he is asking for mechanisms to explain why some particular state of affairs is as it is and not otherwise. Why does silver combine with chlorine to produce silver chloride? The answer is a story in terms of physical conditions, chemical affinities, arrangements within the relevant atoms, and so on. Because the scientist is able to give a clear, satisfying and usable answer to such questions, the theologian may regard this as fulfilling a Divine purpose. But he is not answering the same question even if he frames his question in the same way.

If the scientist says "I don't see the relevance of Divine purposes here, I see only chemical and physical mechanisms and my explanation in terms of them is quite complete and satisfactory," He is being true to his scientific task in refusing to accept scientifically superfluous hypotheses and anything which his five senses will not support. But if he thinks he is thus denying what the theologian has said he is mistaken, in the way the theologian is mistaken if *he* thinks he is pointing to something which the scientist has left out and ought to have included. They both mistakenly think that they are proposing rival answers to the same question.

The point of difference, put more generally, is that the scientist is asking and answering particular questions about particular states of affairs, the theologian is not. The scientist is asking "How does this work?", "What mechanisms account for its working in this way rather than in that?": the theologian is asking "Given that the world is as the scientist describes it, why is it like this?" or, more precisely, "Why is there *some* regularity (not this or that particular form of regularity) which

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE SCIENTIST EXPERIENCES

enables the scientist to discover what he does?" and "Why are there phenomena at all and why are they regular?"

Such questions, which expect a theological answer, covertly ask about Divine purposes and for explanations in terms of such purposes, *whatever* the phenomena are: the particular situation explained or described by the scientist could be quite otherwise and still exhibit the Divine purpose. Scientists do not ask and answer such questions, indeed, cannot, as scientists, ask and answer them. Within the discipline of science there is no language for asking them, no technique for answering them. Its methods afford no means of discovering Divine purposes or Divine Sparks. This means that the scientist, as scientist, can neither affirm nor deny the answers given to such questions by theologians.

We cannot deny the answer to one question by answering another in a different logical category. To the question "What is justice?", the statement "It is blue" is neither a right nor a wrong answer, it is not an answer at all, for the statement. "It is not blue" is neither a right nor a wrong answer. To the question, "How many cows are there in Farmer Brown's field?" there is one right answer, say, "Four," and a host of wrong answers, "Six," "Seven," "Eight," etc. but "Turn left at the crossroad" is neither a right nor a wrong answer to *that* question, so it cannot conflict, or be inconsistent with the right answer. In a similar way, the statement "There is a benevolent God who organized the world in such a way that men are able to discover a structure in it" is neither a right nor a wrong answer to any question science asks or can answer, and so it cannot conflict with any of the answers science gives about the particular form of the structure.

The fundamental and most general difference between the kinds of questions asked and answered by scientists and theologians can, I think, be put in this way. The scientist asks questions about relations within the natural world, and his methods are adapted to answer only such questions: the theologian asks questions about the relations between this same natural world and God, and because God is defined as inaccessible to the methods of science, the theologian must use different methods for reaching an answer, different criteria for judging an answer to be satisfactory. Because of this, the two sets of answers logically cannot conflict. The duty of both sides, it seems to me, is to make this quite clear by making it quite clear what sorts of questions are being asked and what methods will be accepted for answering them. Because this is already reasonably clear for scientific questions but not for theological questions, the scientist can be excused for experiencing difficulty in knowing just what it is that theologians claim to be saying.

IV. CONCLUSION

I have, of course, been talking logic rather than psychology. I have been trying to show that the ordinary facts neither imply nor are evidence for the existence of God, even though we may mistakenly think they are. They do not logically com-

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

pel assent although, men being what they are, they may cause it. The psychological causes of our beliefs must not be confused with the logical reasons for them, and it is with the claim of the ordinary facts to give us *logical reasons* for the belief in God that I have been chiefly concerned.

I have, in the main, pointed to two difficulties which confront the scientist in considering theological statements. The less important is that theological statements appear to be answers to questions which he has already answered, or, at least, questions which he can see how to answer, by his own methods. This difficulty can be removed by showing clearly that questions of logically different kinds are being asked and answered. The other difficulty, which at least contains a real difficulty, is that, according to the scientific criteria of evidence, nothing in our experience seems to be evidence for the existence of God and the attributes ascribed to Him. The scientist seems to be right about this. What he can justly expect from the theologian is that a clear sense be given to the way in which "evidence" is used, if it is used, in theological contexts. He cannot be satisfied with the answer that we must not expect the same kind of evidence for theological as for scientific statements; he needs to be told precisely how this kind of evidence differs and just how to set about finding it. He can be excused for thinking that theological questions are not sensible unless he can be given a clear statement of how to start looking for answers. On the other hand, if no claim about evidence is made, he is justified in asking "Then how *do* you know?" and "How can *I* know?"

Mythos and Logos

BROOKS OTIS

MAN LIVES HIS LIFE in what can be called the world of proximate experience. This is the world to which at least 90% of our activity and thought is devoted: it is the world of work, love and competition, of economics, politics and war. It is the world in which we must earn a living, raise a family, satisfy our personal ambitions and secure the love, friendship or respect of other men and women. But it is a world of very brief duration terminated first by death and second by oblivion. And this experience is, as has been often remarked, repeated in every second of our lives: the past is dead and soon forgotten and the present of actual living eludes us before we can grasp it. We look forward to the future but the future when it comes has the same characteristics. The poignance of such a situation is of course dimmed by many anodynes,—by the very routine of living, by sleep, by brief spurts of pleasure and by the occasional experience of personal success. Nonetheless man sooner or later raises a demand for something more durable and satisfying. The answers to this demand cannot however be found within the world of proximate experience since this world does not of itself provide any vision of things beyond the apparent finality of death and time. The *logos* or rational theory by which man solves the problems of proximate experience does not help him to solve the problems of ultimate experience,—of the meaning of death and time and the universe as a whole. Here he therefore turns to something very different,—to *mythos* or myth, something not directly provable but also necessary in the long run for continued existence even in the world of proximate experience.

I

There have been many *mythoi* or 'myths' in this sense but there are only two major *mythoi*, though the first of these has taken slightly different forms in different cultures. These two *mythoi* represent the two major alternative ways of finding a value or meaningfulness that transcend death and time.

Let us call the first the *Generality mythos*. To this, the central obstacle to all meaningfulness in existence is the destructive movement of time. Time is what spells death to all particular things or configurations: what survive time are only generalities,—patterns that are repeated, types that persist even though their particular exemplars die, ideas that last when their temporal copies do not. These are the evidence for a principle of stability, permanence, changelessness, atemporality and immortality in the universe. Man can achieve real security and happiness only in so far as he withdraws himself from things temporal and particular and merges himself with the eternal, immutable center.

Let us call the second the *Eschatological mythos*. To this, the meaningfulness of existence is inextricably bound in a temporal context: only in such a context can particulars exist or move. But this temporal context is itself anchored to an eternal

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THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

context through which it is saved from ultimate annihilation. Time moves to an end which is the fulfillment of time. This fulfillment is also the redemption of all the particulars within the temporal context. This is because the whole temporal-particular continuum is conceived to be the creation of a personal God who can do with it what He will. He can overcome natural mutability and death because He made them to be overcome: time is the stuff of the dramatic situation in which man is left free to choose the destiny that will be his forever at time's end. The problem is not time and death in themselves but man's good or bad decision. Time and death are merely consequences of this decision and of God's plan to overcome the sin which is wrong decision. The eschaton or end of time is thus both a resurrection or restoration of the past (the dead) and judgment on the past. Only when the drama of man's relations with God and with other men is fully concluded will God's purpose and man's destiny be absolutely clear. In the meantime, however, God has not left man in ignorance: on the contrary he has revealed himself in a variety of ways, finally in the very shape and nature of man. For the essence of man's situation as God has set it up is that (a) man should know God's will and (b) be free to follow it or not and (c) be saved from the consequences of misused freedom so far as this is possible without the total destruction of freedom.

These two myths are nothing but the logical consequences of two basic conceptions of nature. In the first conception, nature is itself divine. This divinity was originally conceived as a pantheon of anthropomorphic beings,—gods with human bodies and thoughts but also natural powers or forces as well. The sun, moon, earth, rivers, winds, sea, and also some animals and plants are gods. This was and is the original religion of most simpler or 'primitive' peoples though in most pre-agricultural societies and many of the less developed agricultural societies the ghosts of the dead play a more important and immediate role than that of the actual 'nature-gods.' The great Chinese, Indian and Hellenic cultures all had such a nature-religion or mythos in their earlier stages. Yet as all these cultures reached a higher level of civilization and developed the capacity to think critically about the world, the discrepancy between the impersonal power and uniformity of nature on the one hand and the human arbitrariness or caprice of the manlike gods on the other hand led to a gradual discarding of the older anthropomorphism. The conception of nature as a living but impersonal force—*physis, brahma, tao*—first coexisted with and then supplanted (at least for the intelligent or educated classes) the simpler nature-religion. In this sense *mythos* yielded to *logos*,—simple myth to critical thought. This process could and did take a simply negative and sceptical turn involving a rejection of all sacral sanctions and ordinary morality: this is vividly exemplified in the Chinese legalists, the Carvaka materialists of India, the Greek Sophists. But it also took—and this was the culturally more important and significant development—the form of a reassertion of *mythos*—of a world of ultimate experience—on a much higher level. This was in effect the *generality mythos* which we have summarized above. Man no longer appealed to Gods, to manlike be-

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

ings like himself but rather tried to achieve or find an identity between his own nature and the universal principle or force behind all things. In this way he could overcome particularity and time and achieve the timeless generality that is at the heart of existence. This meant of course a radical devaluation of ordinary, temporal, corporeal, social life: here the Taoist sage, the Vedantist, the Neo-platonist reveal a remarkable agreement in regimen and aim. The aim was to reject historical existence and human particularity and withdraw into a state without time and without concrete multiplicity. The generality mythos is thus the mythos of de-humanized nature-religion.

And it is just this that constitutes the real problem of the generality mythos. The older nature gods were admittedly very unsatisfactory but they at least showed some sort of human purpose and concern. They were to some degree 'thous' with which the human 'I' could make contact. This was not true of the impersonal *physis* or *logos*, *brahma* or *tao*. Platonism and Stoicism, for example, tried hard but very unsuccessfully to combine the idea of purpose and providence with an essentially impersonal *logos* or archetypal unity. Carneades rightly exposed the absurd inconsistency of Zeno and Chrysippus on this point. The very idea of *purpose* cannot logically exist in an immutable being who is also the whole of nature: how can he purpose to be something other than he already is? But this can only mean that the whole temporal, historical order is simply deprived of any real significance. It is good only in so far as it reveals a certain remnant or attenuated form of atemporal generality: the best that time can do is to move in a repetitive cycle. But in so far as it is time or movement it is a force that is alien to the divine and exists in spite of the divine. In so far as particular existence — existence within a temporal, material context — is concerned, it can only save itself by destroying itself, — by letting itself be absorbed in the timeless generality which is by definition its absolute antithesis. The contradiction here is not felt only by the modern Western mind but emerges clearly within the three cultures themselves. What reader of the *Gita*, for example, can fail to be impressed by the discrepancy between Arjuna's sense of caste duty and his desire for immediate emancipation? What student of Buddhism can fail to remark the singular lack of motivation for Buddha's great act of pity in withholding his own nirvana until he had taught others the way? The failure of the basic mythical premise to supply a reason for social or human concern is surely as great here as in Stoicism or in Taoism themselves. The whole modern development of social idealism in India — the Ramakrishna mission, Ghandi, etc. — come, as is well known, not from native Indian sources but from the Christian and humanitarian West.

In contrast the eschatological mythos was by its intrinsic nature unsusceptible to dehumanization of this sort. It contained in itself what we may call a principle of mythical resistance to logos. Its God retained his personal, anthropomorphic character: in fact Christianity, as distinct from Judaism, owes its origin to a deliberate

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

reassertion of the divine humanity. The reason for this is quite evident from what has already been said. For the Jewish-Christian God was not a nature-god as were other nature-gods. As creator He was above nature: he was not identified with any natural force or power. Nature was the product and not the essence of his arbitrary will. He thus could not be reduced to a principle of generality within nature. On the contrary, his personality could never be depersonalized because there was no impersonal standard to which he was supposed to conform. God remained a 'thou' confronting the human 'I': one particular being beside another particular being. But God also remained the source and ground of all being as its creator and sustainer. This is why God is able *both* to inform time with personal meaning *and* to master time and death by overcoming its destructiveness in an eschatological triumph over it.

II

But this does not mean that the eschatological mythos was completely immunized against logos or critical reduction. In fact there have been three major attempts to reduce or transform this mythos by largely eliminating its eschatological content.

1. The first took place in the Greek-speaking area of the Eastern Mediterranean in the first four Christian centuries. It was, to speak in very summary terms, an effort to harmonize the eschatological and generality mythoi or, in other words, Jewish-Christian and Greek-platonic ideas. Though heretical attempts to deny the major credal tenets—including the eschaton—were rejected, salvation was more and more conceived as the acquisition of divinity in the sense of a generalized and timeless condition—an escape from temporal particular existence—rather than an eschatological redemption of time itself. The world of becoming—the (*genetic*) world subject to birth and death and change in time—was regarded, in the characteristic manner of the generality mythos, as a mere obstacle or mainly negative thing to be overcome and superseded by its exact opposite, beginningless (*agenetic*) and deathless stability.

2. A quite different development occurred in the Latin or Romanized West. Here the effort was not primarily to follow the Greek East in conceiving salvation to be divination or *theosis* in the sense of overcoming temporal particularity but to transform the new Christian society—the Church—into a permanent divine institution with both heavenly and earthly branches so to speak. Eventually the branch on earth will be merged with the branch in heaven: this is the eschaton. In effect the movement of time and history is stopped in this conception: the last judgment is anticipated in all essential respects since the Church is the final and authoritative manifestation of God's will on earth. Of course individual members of the Church remain to be judged but even here the collective last judgment is effectively anticipated by an individual judgment after death. The effect of such a reinterpretation of the eschatological mythos was to make the whole mythos extremely vulnerable to

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

logos or critical thought within the world of proximate experience, since in fact the ecclesiastical organization did not succeed in stopping the movement of history or establishing a truly stable religious society. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the secularism of the Church itself combined with the emergence of a far more dynamic European culture to shake the ecclesiastical ideal to its very foundation. The Church has survived but without unity or real ability to direct the course of events.

3. The third attack on the eschatological mythos corresponds rather closely to that of logos on mythos in the Chinese, Indian and Greek cultures. The scientific movement which started in the era of the Renaissance had an experimental or inductive character which we cannot parallel in any culture associated with a generality mythos and which really seems to be due in large part to the Christian attitude toward nature. Nonetheless it was also a continuation of Greek logical and mathematical thought and sought to subject the data it discovered in exploration or experiment to highly abstract and mathematical treatment. This at once created a very marked tension with the anthropomorphic thought-world of the eschatological mythos. This tension was not the same as that, for example, between the old nature-gods of Greece and the conception of natural generality which emerged from the *logos* of Ionia, for as we have seen the God of the eschatological mythos was never identified with nature as were the nature-gods. Nevertheless the creation and action of God had been conceived in an anthropomorphic way which seemed to be incompatible with the new idea of generalized, predictable action according to mathematically statable theory. We cannot describe all the results of this development: it is in fact all but coterminous with the whole of modern intellectual history. Two results must however be briefly mentioned: One is the re-emergence of scepticism as to the existence of any world of ultimate reality and underlies all the theories which can be labeled very loosely as forms of *naturalism*, — the attempt to confine reality to observable phenomena; the other can be as loosely labeled *idealism* and constitutes in effect a bifurcation of the universe that claims equal authority and trust for the world of value on the one hand and the world of physical phenomena and scientific law on the other, since both are manifestations of mind. For the fact that the mind is the funnel through which all experience must pass was conceived to involve the superior status of mind over experience. But this attempt to raise mind over experience has signally failed because in fact bare mind — the mind before or above experience — is a mere abstraction.

III

This analysis — telescoped, oversimplified and schematic as it is — may nevertheless help to bring out the essential point in the relation of mythos and logos. This is in brief that logos has in the past tended to reduce an original mythos (i.e., a mythos not already exposed to logos) either to nonentity (myth in the popular sense of falsehood) or to some form of generality mythos. No analysis of the human

needs and concerns which mythos admittedly meets as logos does not, can of itself rehabilitate mythos except in the form of a generality mythos. It can do no good to accept the eschatological mythos in a 'symbolic' or 'non-literal' way if the referents of the symbols are accepted only as given in generality mythos. Here it seems that the allegorizing of Origen is quite the same in effect as the symbolic interpretation of Tillich (i.e. the interpretation of biblical or theological statements—in short the statements of the eschatological mythos—as statements of a really *ontological* or philosophical character). This is equivalent to saying that the Bible must mean what a given doctrine of being means. But the Bible is not logos but mythos, and when logos reduces mythos in this way the result is always, as I have said, the reduction of mythos to myth (simple falsehood) or the reduction of all mythos to a generality mythos. And a generality mythos is precisely mythos in which there is no personal God, no ultimate concern for the particular, no real victory of the particular over the destructiveness of time.

Modern interpretations of Christianity have not, it seems to me, altered in any essential way the basic problem involved in the logos-mythos relation. The existentialist analysis which really started with Kierkegaard, though its full development and impact was delayed for almost a century, has thrown very great light on a dimension of human existence: that of the particular human being in time who yet claims a meaningfulness beyond time and death—to which no objective philosophy like, for example, Hegel's had done justice. The attempt of modern man in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to live without mythos as if he could satisfy all his human demands in the world of proximate experience and, perhaps even more significantly, his appalling contemporary attempt to live by pseudo-mythoi in which aspects of proximate experience—a particular national group, a particular kind of economic system—are given a false ultimacy, have revealed the deficiency of all philosophies which neglect the plight of the particular human being in himself. But between this particular human being, man in his existential situation, and any decisive reassertion of the eschatological mythos still stands logos,—this time in the form of modern science and modern scientific method. Atheistic existentialism accepts logos as truth of a kind that is wholly incompatible with any mythos: all that man can do is to accept the "absurdity" of his situation and in quite personal and wholly subjective manner assert himself against it. But much modern religious thinking also rejects the eschatological mythos for the same reason,—the fact that it is not compatible with modern logos. In other words there is felt to be no cosmic Person who really exists and who really can save the individual from time and death but merely an ultimate meaningfulness—a ground of being—which the particular must accept as his sole value even though this is not salvation of his particular existence. To put it plainly and bluntly, much modern religious thought rejects the idea of personal survival of death in any form. And it rejects it primarily because it no longer believes in the God of the eschatological mythos—that is in a God who really has power over time and death. It reveals here most clearly

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

the decisive influence of logos for it is just at this point—at the point where God's real power over nature is at stake—that the eschatological mythos seems most incompatible with logos in its modern form.

Here also a curious sort of double game is often played even to a point of considerable self-deception. When we interpret the language of mythos as allegory or symbolism or some form of "non-literal" statement—*i. e.* as pointing to a referent other than that literally or actually given—we are saying of course that the thing symbolized and not the symbol is the reality,—the "thing-in-itself." But what we believe the referent of the symbol to be will be determined solely by our particular theory of truth or reality. To Origen this was essentially Platonism: to Tillich it is a particular kind of ontology (clearly derived from German idealism and existentialism): to Bultmann it is really a kind of modern existentialism very like that of Heidegger. Now this is something very different from simply rejecting a merely literalist or fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. For one can accept the eschatological mythos as truth or reality and use it as a criterion of biblical interpretation without thereby accepting every statement of the Bible as literal truth. This is so because the Bible is not the mythos itself but merely a *statement* of the mythos in language partly literal, partly symbolical and allegorical. It is also a statement made by people over a thousand years or more and is therefore in no sense completely consistent. But this does not mean that we cannot get at the essential mythos—the real core of mythical truth or what purports to be the truth—which the Bible reveals. When we survey the history of mythoi, as I have tried to do in exceedingly schematic fashion in the first section of this paper, we can I think find out what the essential eschatological mythos is. One can still dispute about details and perhaps about some essentials: but I think it is in principle possible to distinguish quite clearly between the eschatological mythos as such and alternative mythoi or theories of truth. We can for example say with very considerable assurance that the eschatological mythos is *not* the generality mythos. If we try to reinterpret the eschatological mythos as a symbol or allegory of generality mythos, then we are really saying that the generality mythos and not the eschatological mythos is the truth.

IV

We can thus come to the nub of the problem. To what extent is logos really compatible with either the generality or the eschatological mythos? At first sight it seems far more compatible with the generality mythos since the generality mythos posits an impersonal nature which does not involve miracles or awkward interferences with a system of internal causation. The abstract, generalized character of modern science seems far closer to an abstract, generalized view of nature. But when we look at another aspect of the modern logos, the generality mythos can be seen to be all but incompatible with it. What appealed to the ancient Greeks as the reality in nature with which the anthropomorphic nature gods could hardly be recon-

ciled was a permanence or permanent regularity which survived the temporality and mutability of particular existents. Nature as a whole was a constant entity. Nature worked by a logos or law that was itself immutable. To Plato the phenomenal world was an imperfect copy of the ideal world and even the time of the phenomenal world was a copy of eternity in that it was repetitive. Thus nature itself pointed beyond time to eternity. If the phenomenal world were considered to be simply an illusion — as with the Eleatics and the Vedantists — it would nonetheless be an illusion which revealed as well as concealed a reality. So far as the life of man is concerned, emancipation from merely phenomenal existence is possible because man is grounded in a nature which is itself translucent to ultimate permanent reality. It is precisely such a view of nature that modern science has all but destroyed. We cannot now make sense of the universe without the temporal dimension. The eternal universes of both Ptolemy and Newton are to the modern conception as snapshots to a full-length cinema. Even most scientific law is to be viewed as the characteristic of a particular epoch of nature, not as a characteristic of nature *überhaupt*. The very different character of the worlds that are infinitely small and infinitely great from the world of Newtonian or Euclidean experience has given us a perspective which makes talk about the eternity of any particular natural configuration seem quite parochial. The fact is that time is a far more radical dissolvent than we had thought. This is not merely because the universe is doomed to increasing randomness or entropy (if in fact it is and there is not as some think a constant principle of creation within it) but because it really is subject to radical transformations that dissolve the very texture of most seeming identities save perhaps at the very lowest electromagnetic level. This is why it is so extremely implausible to posit an existential unity between man as such and any ground of being in nature.

We can put all this most succinctly perhaps by saying that for the modern logos the most fundamental category is time or that for it reality has an historical character. This is the essential idea of modern process philosophy and in this respect modern process philosophy represents a radical break with both the Aristotelian and the Cartesian or Newtonian conceptions of reality. But modern process philosophy has rather conspicuously failed to give meaning to the temporal process. Whitehead for example finds the really organic character of the process in its lowest component element—the atomic event—and conceives of God's nature as in part the consequence of the conjoint action of the events in process. Neither he nor Bergson nor Alexander nor Croce had any real conception of a God in terms of which the whole temporal process possesses direction and meaning. They protested against the older block universe in which the past wholly determined the future and in which therefore no true novelty ever emerged, but they all looked upon the on-going process as a rather blind movement which produced God rather than was produced by God. Their utmost concession to a meaningful or vital principle in existence was to posit the pan-psychic character of nature at all levels:

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

this however signally failed to do justice to temporal process as an intelligible order or whole.

Whenever, however, we really think through the idea of meaningful temporal process we inevitably arrive at something very close to the eschatological mythos. That is to say we arrive at the idea of a power controlling temporal process in a way which can have personal meaning to us. In so far as God is above nature, nature as it unfolds in time will never constitute a self-sufficient entity in terms of which each successive present can be simply deduced from the past. On the other hand the temporal process will not be merely arbitrary but will possess an order of its own. There are, I think, very strong reasons for seeing even in the rather limited range of temporal process accessible to us an order which cannot be reduced to mere randomness or chance without a very improbable theory of probability. This however is an immense topic that I can only mention in passing: the chief point I want to stress here is that the modern man who accepts the modern logos in at least its major emphases and findings is almost inevitably forced to choose between either a really atheistic type of process philosophy or what finally amounts to an overt or covert acceptance of the eschatological mythos. What is no longer possible is to view nature in simply non-temporal terms as the true expression or experience of the whole of reality. There can be no adequate doctrine of being that is not conjoined with a doctrine of time.

Much the same problem also arises in modern theories of human history. Here the modern world has, just as in its physics and biology, accepted the radically temporal character of existence: history is transformation not in the sense that it is a series of variations on an essentially identical theme or of merely repetitive cycles of events but in the sense that it is the bringer of genuine novelty and of a future that is always essentially different from the past. Modern man finds the historical theory of China, Greece and Rome — the theory of history as the infinitely repeated effect of an unalterable human psychology — to be simply naive and wholly lacking a real chronological perspective. But the modern view of history does not find any true meaningfulness in it. It wavers in fact between a utopian optimism and a cynical pessimism depending on whether it views the past as a prelude to future perfection or to future ruin. But no matter what one expects of the future, it can never atone for the destructiveness of time. The future that really matters to the particular individual is not the unknown future beyond the present but the future of the past itself. If every particular moment is doomed as soon as it slides into the past, then there can be no escape from ultimate meaninglessness. Here Soloviev expressed the fundamental truth when he declared that what really mattered was not the future of our great grandchildren but the future of our great grandfathers. This is why any view of history that finds the only locus of meaning in present or future is bound to be almost intolerably superficial.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Here again if we want meaning we must get beyond a conception of temporal process as the mere movement of present-death,—that is the conception of the present as that which reduces all vitality to a rigid and unalterable pastness. Here the very historicism of modern man — his consciousness of time as radical transformation — has, just as in his physical science, made any form of the generality mythos almost impossible. From this standpoint even so relatively recent a thinker as Emerson, with his notion of Man as a constant entity always finding the same nature around him and always rediscovering in his own experience the experience of his ancestors (so that he could be, so to speak, his own Christ in a perennially firsthand contact with deity), seems touched with a curious obsolescence. We cannot solve the problem of time by treating it as an illusion or as a tread-mill. The most eloquent testimony to the failure of Taoism, Buddhism, or Hinduism to satisfy modern man is in fact the present condition of India and China.

Actually the only live option today is a choice between the eschatological mythos and mere atheistic negation. The pseudo-mythoi — the various attempts to give a show of ultimacy to proximate experience, to a new social order or a national group — are doomed by the very nature of the temporal process for no present or future moment can ever satisfy an actual man and no social or intellectual structure can defy the action of time. Here the medieval experiment—the attempt to make Christianity a permanent institution rather than an eschatological conquest of time — itself prepared the way for its own decline. It simply could not contain the future and the future repudiated the theory which tried to immobilize it. Very unfortunately, however, though probably inevitably, the reformation and renaissance criticism of the medieval church did not in fact repudiate it on the ground of its perversion of eschatology. Instead they also repudiated an essentially eschatological conception of Christianity and operated with quite non-eschatological conceptions of individual piety and decision or individual happiness in the world. Also the profundity of the eschatological insight — the thought that the particular person is always bound in a temporal context and that real salvation of the particular person can never be divorced from the salvation of the temporal context itself — was lost in part because it seemed to both ancient and modern logos a merely miraculous and crude conception, — a mere aspect of the climate of opinion in first century Judea. Yet ironically enough belief in miracle, the survival of death and the power of God over nature was made extraordinarily difficult by the very fact of being removed from an eschatological frame of reference. They become mere interruptions of a constant nature rather than manifestations of the divine character of a temporal process which is at once unpredictable novelty and the fulfillment of an integrated whole.

V

Here we come at last to the fundamental factor which determines the relation of mythos and logos. The early nature myths were unable to hold out against the power of logos because they simply did not correspond to a growing insight into

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

the constancy and generality of nature. What we have called the generality mythos was an attempt to find meaning in a nature that was shorn of personal or mythical-anthropomorphic character. But such a mythos, as we have seen, could not do justice to man's demand for meaning in his social and cultural life: society and finally nature itself were devalued in the Neoplatonic, Taoist, Buddhist, Vedantist and other Hindu systems. On the other hand, the meaninglessness of the temporal process (the destructiveness of the past, the elusive instantaneousness of the present, the not-yetness of the future) could only be met by denying the radical transformation that time effects in both nature and human history. Modern logos in its theory of nature and history has fully recognized and even given supreme emphasis to the temporal character of existence but it has been almost pitifully superficial in its attempt to find meaning in time. To treat the past as a mere prelude to a secular present or future rests as we have said on a thoroughly false optimism about the future (or alternately a false cynicism) and, more fundamentally, on a failure to see that no doctrine of the future can solve the tragedy of the past. But modern logos has tended to reject the eschatological mythos because it cannot really believe in a God who has power over time.

In fact it would be true to say that the Whiteheadian view—or the view of process philosophy in general—of a God who is the mere creature of process (in other words of time itself) is the one which modern logos finds easiest to accept when indeed it thinks in theistic terms at all. This is due to a number of reasons but fundamentally to a reason that is common to the most naive as well as the most sophisticated levels of modern thought,—that is an utter inability to believe that God can intervene from outside the process or that such things as the Sinai covenant, the Resurrection, and a real eschatological event are possible in any sense save that of symbols for certain subjective experiences. Such a symbolic interpretation must, it seems true, posit in the last resort a theory of reality which is only another form of the generality mythos. In fact the propounders of such symbolic interpretation in our own day mix their theories with a rather desperate attempt to assert both the meaningfulness of temporal process as well as that of particular individuals. Their systems thus seem to me to be profoundly illogical. The eschatological mythos cannot be symbolized in these terms without indeed being converted into its exact opposite—generality mythos.

A mere literalism is certainly not the answer. Nevertheless the eschatological mythos can only be truly meaningful when it is taken as pointing to real temporal events—to real loci of the divine breakthrough or more strictly the divine shaping of time become visible at particular points of translucency. For the eschatological mythos is *not* simply a mythical symbol of nature but also a purportedly factual history of temporal process. This is why it was finally resistant to logos as the older nature myths were not and why it is today consistent with a view of radical temporal change as the generality mythos is not. The main prerequisite to an under-

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

standing of eschatological mythos today is not (as it never can be) mere willingness to believe without evidence but rather a deeper insight into the true character of time. A lesser but important prerequisite is much greater clarity as to the relation of symbol to object symbolized. Here we certainly can make some use of the modern critical analysis of language and syntax if we can only avoid the positivistic presuppositions of many of the analysts. But in the last resort the relation of logos and mythos today is a problem of what we conceive the true character of the temporal structure of events to be. Here as in the past logos and mythos confront each other in a tension of attraction and hostility which we can accept in faith even if the ultimate outcome lies beyond any rational prediction.

Thus the major point at issue here has been often obscured in modern discussion of the Bible. This is the simple fact that whatever liberties of interpretation we may take with the Bible we can never eliminate the reference to some kind of intervention within history from a force that is beyond history without also eliminating the Bible's claim to be history. *In concreto*, this involves chiefly our interpretation of the Exodus experience—the divine choosing of the Jews—and of the Resurrection—the event in which the Church saw validation of Christ's messianic and eschatological claims. In so far as we see these events to be unique exceptions to universal, natural law or to a purely self-contained history operating only through causes internal to itself, we are involved in a psychologically impossible antithesis of fact and reason. But really modern logos as we have just seen does not at all involve such a view but rather tends to regard time as the locus of both continuity and radical novelty. I cannot further discuss this very difficult problem here. All I wish to point out is that we cannot escape it by accepting the data or theories of 'science' (often quite out of date when the non-specialist becomes aware of them) as a structure of fact that has no real bearing on the reality of ultimate religious experience. We cannot believe by eliminating logos or asserting the independence of logos from mythos. Whether we like it or not, we are so made that the tension of logos and mythos will continue to operate in us and in our environment.

VI

And here we encounter a final fact of the most decisive importance. This is that the eschatological mythos finds the most powerful vehicle of its realization in logos itself. For in effect what this mythos, if taken seriously, asserts is that man can never hope to achieve any sort of permanence or cultural stability and that death and time themselves are signs or indices of a sinfulness which corrupts and dooms all human enterprise. Time is meaningful not in that it ever gives meaning to the passing moment (no passing moment can be so beautiful as to heed the Faustian cry of 'stay') but in the sense that its very motion is bringing to completion a drama whose end is redemption. One of the chief factors which time expresses and mobilizes is the cumulative process of man's understanding of nature and himself : that is *logos*. Logos is what gives man the illusion of power and progress and that raises

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

both his creativity and his sinfulness to a quite new dimension. It is thus at once the thing with which man tries to overcome the temporal fragility of his existence and the thing which threatens this existence most directly. While logos strives to establish a climate of permanency in a world of temporality and death, it establishes finally a climate of eschatological violence. Altogether it would almost seem that there can be no limit to human knowledge save human destructiveness. In this sense man is the master of nature and time is the master of both. Ironically enough it is logos—the very embodiment of man's attempt to build a rational society in which the problems of history shall be eliminated—that seems to push man toward ever greater historical activity and eventually a more serious and more objective eschatology.

Thus the eschatological mythos points to something quite beyond the perspectives of Aquinas or Calvin, Bacon, or Marx, Origen or Tillich. For it, there is no ecclesiastical and there is no secular and there is no natural order that can escape sin, tragedy and judgement. Logos as the very instrument which destroys false mythos and false security, try as they may to make logos their tool, is thus the executor and proof of the eschatological mythos. For what we have really to fear perhaps is not logos itself but the corruption of mythos. In this sense the tension of logos and mythos is nothing but the coming of truth in time.

Books and Publications

+ - *The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism.* By Philip Wheelwright, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954. 406 pages. \$6.00.

Ours is a time, it must surely by now be clear, in which the reigning philosophy is one which is controlled by a profound antipathy to the humanistic uses of the imagination. It is, of course, a philosophy — whether one calls it Logical Analysis or Scientific Empiricism or Neo-Positivism — which has chosen to be a handmaiden of science and the dogmatic theology of a technological culture: so it is not strange that it has also chosen to identify "reality" with the system of public operables which are the focus of inquiry in the natural sciences, and it is equally consistent with its fundamental position in its insistence that the only kind of language that means anything at all is that which puts forward empirically verifiable propositions about these operables. And in a period when the practical achievements of science and technology have been so impressive, it was perhaps inevitable that this kind of philosophic simplicism should have attained, as it has, the status of orthodoxy.

However the ascendancy of philosophic positivism, though, is to be explained in terms of social and cultural causation, its predominance in the present climate of opinion is hardly to be gainsaid and does indeed create the occasion in our intellectual life today that summons the humanistic intelligence to the task of revindicating the non-scientific and expressive uses of language that are common to poetry and myth and religion and metaphysics. This is a task which, regrettably, Christian philosophers and theologians have yet to undertake with anything like the rigor that the present polemical occasion demands. But, in this, as in so many other respects, our men of letters have shown themselves to be perhaps the most active custodians in the contemporary situation of humanistic values, and during the last decade or so we have gotten from critics and theorists like Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks many shrewd and penetrating demonstrations in the context of poetic theory of how absurdly parochial it is to base a semantics upon the one type of highly specialized symbolization represented by the language of science, and then to hold all other modes of discourse accountable to the canons of meaning and truth appropriate to this one field. Indeed, the issue that is by way of becoming the focal problem in contemporary literary theory is that which was adumbrated long ago in the title of Shelley's famous essay, the "Defense of Poetry" — the briefs for which are, in various aspects, to be found in such major modern texts as D. G. James' *Scepticism and Poetry*, Allen Tate's *On the Limits of Poetry*, Cleanth Brooks' *The Well Wrought Urn*, and Eliseo Vivas' quite recent book *Creation and Discovery*.

Now Mr. Wheelwright's book has the great attractiveness of being perhaps the most fully *representative* text in this body of literature, and it is so because it cogently schematizes and systematizes insights and concepts and procedures that till now have been widely scattered and uncontained within a single, coherent theory of language and symbolism. Indeed, one is tempted to say that it is the first really

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

unignorable reply to the semantics of Neo-Positivism—but so to speak of it would be simply to re-commit what has now unfortunately come to be our habitual error of ignoring the late Wilbur Marshall Urban's great book *Language and Reality*, the formidability of whose attack upon the foundations of Positivism makes it one of the truly important texts in contemporary literature, notwithstanding the extent to which it has been neglected by recent students. But profound as Urban's understanding of the fundamental issues was, his grasp of the poetic process was in many respects wrongheaded and insecure, and this may well explain why recent literary theorists have so infrequently drawn upon him. But, though by profession a philosopher also, Mr. Wheelwright, in this particular, is well-nigh invulnerable: his book reveals (as, indeed, his contributions to the literary quarterlies have also done, over many years) that he possesses a sensitive and intimate acquaintance with the entire range of idiom not only in the field of imaginative literature but also in the fields of myth and religion. And it is this which gives to his book a richness that Urban's work, great as it is, finally lacks and that, one feels, makes *The Burning Fountain* a book destined to become a major document in modern theory of poetry and in the more general field of theory of symbolism.

Mr. Wheelwright begins by accepting the antithesis (that descends in modern semantics from Carnap and the early I. A. Richards) between scientific language, or what he calls "steno-language," and expressive language, or what he calls "depth language"—which is the language of poetry and religion: these are, indeed, he affirms, the two main uses of language. But he denies, in opposition to the Positivists, that the referential functions of language are preëmpted by scientific discourse and that expressive language can be merely emotive, for this primary dogma of modern Positivism is one which, as Mr. Wheelwright realizes, rests upon an arbitrary and a false presupposition and which misconstrues the true nature of both poetic and religious experience. He does not, of course, want to deny that expressive discourse is involved in emotion, but he does want to call into question the assumption that language which is intrinsically emotive cannot perform a referential function—and *vice versa*. His contention is that in expressive discourse language "is referential and emotive at once—not by incidental conjunction as in the cry of 'Fire!' but in the more organic sense that the referential function, the proper meaning, takes at least some of its essential character from the emotivity of the language, and changes therefore as the emotivity changes" (p. 50). And by way of refuting the Positivists' denial that expressive discourse embodies this kind of semantic objectivity, he undertakes a systematic exposition of the basic principles of "metalogical signification." He accomplishes this by a radical inversion of the assumptions underlying the semantics of Logical Positivism—by converting the assumption that linguistic symbols are always distinguishable from their referents and are therefore to be used merely by stipulation, into the principle of "iconic signification" (that there are symbols which, although they may point beyond themselves, have a largely self-intentive reference as well); the assumption of univoca-

tion, into the principle of "plurisignation" (that expressive symbols tend to carry more than one legitimate reference) ; the assumption that legitimate symbols must always have definite and ideally definable meanings, into the "principle of soft focus" (that there are meanings which do not have definite outlines and which cannot be adequately represented by terms that are strictly defined) ; the assumption that a given sign must keep the same meaning throughout the course of a given argument or science, into the "principle of contextualism" (that the full meaning of expressive symbols may, within certain controlled contexts, undergo moderate shifts) ; the assumption that logical universality and existential particularity are the only two nodi of meaning, into the "principle of paralogical dimensionality" (that there are other nodi of meaning than those which constitute the coordinates of logical discourse, such as the "concrete universal" in poetry) ; the assumption that any true proposition is equally true with any other true proposition and that any false proposition is equally false with any other, into the "principle of assertorial tone" (that the susceptibility of statements to affirmation or denial depends upon their "assertorial weight," that poetic statements assert more lightly than literal statements and that their truth is more fragile) ; the assumption that for every proposition there is another such that the truth of either implies the falsity of the other and the falsity of either implies the truth of the other, into the "principle of paradox" (that two statements which by the canons of strict logic are mutually contradictory may sometimes be jointly acceptable) ; the assumption that every true proposition has an intelligible and assignable place in a system of true propositions, to at least some of which it is related by strict implication, into the "principle of significant mystery" (that the truth or falsity of an expressive statement transcends to some degree the evidence of any possible set of propositions which might stand to it in the relation of ground to consequent).

The reader may by now, of course, be just a trifle breathless, but, if that is so, it is because of the elephantine dimensions of the sentence which has just been concluded : it can most certainly not, however, be the result of any vertiginous unreality in the ideas with which Mr. Wheelwright is dealing, for he makes plain what is at issue here : it is precisely the question as to whether a scientific vision of things and a scientific mode of statement is the only true vision and the only true mode of statement : if so, why, then, of course, "the consequences, provided you carry them out vigorously, will be utterly destructive" not only for poetry and art, but also for religion and metaphysics and even ethics — "that is to say, for the very mainsprings of significant human living." And this is why he properly conceives it to be of such great moment for our generation to seek a renewed and deepened understanding of the nature of language and symbolism, so that it may not withdraw into the arid scholasticism of the Positivists and thus abdicate from the really full and living semantic situations that are posited by poetry and religion and metaphysics and that are of deepest concern to us, since it is in them that the most serious search for truth must be pursued.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

And at this point Mr. Wheelwright valiantly plunges into all those thorny questions that bristle before us, when we attempt to define the respects in which the expressive language of poetry and religion may be adjudged a vehicle of genuine cognition. Here he argues with great eloquence that the truth-possibilities of expressive statements should be kept open and that, upon the basis of arbitrary postulates, to rule out in advance the possibility of there being any real truth of other than a scientific and logical kind is not a sensible procedure. Yet when, as it were, he gets down to cases, his own resolution of the issue fails somehow to be altogether satisfying. He rejects the correspondence-theory of truth (the crudities of which he correctly discerns as a bedevilling factor in Positivist epistemology), and he also has little difficulty in demonstrating the inadequacies of the coherence-and the intuitive-theories of truth—but, in their stead, he proposes a postulational doctrine of truth that does not altogether succeed in being convincing. Truth is, he says, that which ought, *by one criterion or another*, to be assented to. “To affirm the truth of God’s existence or the truth of the Golden Rule, is not to affirm a scientific fact, but neither is it simply to exude an emotion, nor is it simply to report that I happen to like the ideas involved. It is to affirm that I *ought* to assent to them—and by implication that others ought to assent to them . . .” (p. 290). And, similarly, he argues that “A poetic utterance invites our imaginative assent, which is to say our depth assent, to some degree or other and in some context or other. So far as we yield such assent joyfully and gain insight in so doing, there is a real and valid sense in which we can speak of ‘poetic truth’” (p. 302). In other words, his general principle is that the truth-claims which are carried by expressive language are to be taken seriously, though they are not to be assessed in the same manner in which the truth-claims put forward in “steno-language” are to be assessed—and always, he insists, the “depth-meanings” of expressive discourse are inseparable from the fundamental loyalties which are implicitly appealed to when they are given embodiment in imaginative statement. For truth—in poetry, in art, in religion—is that to which assent is invited and that which, when assented to, conveys enhancement of insight. But at no point does Mr. Wheelwright clearly sketch out the contours of that body of principle which is to be appealed to in the adjudication of dispute, and it is just here that his thought seems somehow to carry insufficient weight. To be religious, he says, is to believe in and to invite assent to the idea of “a spiritually responsive universe”: this is, he tells us, the context of thought within which the religious man takes his point of purchase and arrives at “truth.” “And let us not delude ourselves with the hope that there are truths independent of any context whatever. When we think that, and act on it, we merely become blind to the contextual limitations that condition every judgment and every insight . . .” (p. 302). But what of the man who takes his point of purchase in a context of thought radically different from that in which the religious man lives and who refuses to assent to the idea of a spiritually responsive universe? And how are their conflicting truth-claims to be adjudicated? Or, similarly, Mr. Wheelwright tells us that in-

dividual statements in a poem may be false if taken out of context and that "the relevant question is, How true is it within that context?" Yet how are we to weigh and measure and assess the relative truthfulness of the vision of life emerging, say, out of the total context of T. S. Eliot's poetry against such an opposed vision of life as emerges out of the total context of the poetry of Robinson Jeffers? To such questions as these Mr. Wheelwright, as I read him, gives us no clear answer, and it may well be that just at this point his argument is embarrassed by difficulties that are irresolvable in terms of even so sophisticated a version of the contextualist doctrine of truth as he puts forward.

So much, then, for the strategies that Mr. Wheelwright adopts by way of advancing his argument that the various modes of expressive language do convey genuine meaning and that their truth-claims are to be taken seriously. And now I wish that I had sufficient space in which to review fully his analysis of the nature of the imaginative activity of which expressive language is the product. For his chapter on the "Ways of Imagination" is one of the finest sections of the book. He accepts the Coleridgean doctrine of the continuity between man's primary—or constitutive—imagination and his secondary—or poetic—imagination, and he also recognizes the cogency of Coleridge's view of the function of the imagination as "esemplastic" or synthetic. Yet he feels, and rightly so, that many modern critics—particularly those who represent the "New Criticism"—in appropriating Coleridge's legacy, have tended to overemphasize the "esemplastic," synthesizing activity of the imagination which is, he insists, by no means the only mode of its functioning. There are, indeed, he argues "four main respects in which the imagination functions cognitively and constructively at once. There is the Confrontative Imagination, which acts upon its object by particularizing and intensifying it. There is the Stylistic Imagination, which acts upon its object by stylizing and distancing it. There is the Archetypal Imagination, which sees the particular object as embodying and adumbrating suggestions of universality. And there is the Metaphoric Imagination, which fuses heterogeneous elements into some kind of unity" (p. 78).

Throughout this section of the book Wheelwright's fine analytic gifts are displayed most impressively, and his formulations will, I suspect, prove to be permanently valuable, and, in so far as they remind us of modes of the imagination other than the esemplastic, they should provide a much needed corrective to certain exaggerations in the poetic theory of the "New Criticism."

At no point, of course, in his book is it a major purpose of Mr. Wheelwright's to assess the merits of the poetic theory of the "New Criticism," and, in the one instance that I have just cited, he does so only in passing—and yet one wishes that he had chosen at many points to bring certain of its leading doctrines under some critical pressure, for to have done so would have been for him, by reason of his own close affiliation with this movement, to have submitted his own presuppositions to a closer inspection. In particular—and here I am brought back to the semantical

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

problem — I wish, for the sake of the heightened interest it would have given his argument, that Wheelwright had met head-on the criticism that the "Chicago Aristotelians" have so frequently leveled at the "New Critics" and that, at this point, they might level at him as well, since his supposition is that which men like R. S. Crane have criticized in their confrères in the "New Criticism" — namely, that poetry is, fundamentally, a mode of discourse and that it is to be regarded *primarily* as one pole of *language*, the other end of which is science. If I may take over a line from Mr. Elder Olson's essay on Empson,¹ Mr. Wheelwright — together with men like Ransom and Brooks and Tate — is saying that poetry is simply an aspect or condition of language, that it is definable as language differentiated from other language by a certain attribute — and since the "other language" is the language of science, it then becomes necessary to derive all "the high claims of poetry . . . from a consideration of those potentialities of language which are left over, once the specialized use of words in science has been defined."² And the question which the "Chicago Aristotelians" — Crane and Olson and W. R. Keast, among others — have raised is whether or not such a tactic doesn't leave out much that is crucial in poetry (its modes of production, its kinds, its effects, etc.) and whether or not such a tactic doesn't really render the literary theorist, in a way, captive to the scientific ethos which he wants to combat. Indeed, Professor Meyer Abrams, in his review of *The Burning Fountain* (*The Kenyon Review*, Winter 1955), has argued that Wheelwright is, in fact, "a prisoner to the theory he opposes." This is, I think, much too easy a dismissal of the seriousness with which Mr. Wheelwright has sought to address himself to the present climate of opinion, but the issue is certainly one which one wishes he had anticipated somewhat more than he seems to have done.

But whatever the weaknesses of Mr. Wheelwright's book — and let us be clear about it: they are not disabling ones — it must be acknowledged as a splendid achievement to which all serious students of contemporary culture will be having to return again and again for many years to come.

Nathan A. Scott, Jr.

The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Vol. 2: Mythical Thought. By Ernst Cassirer, translated by Ralph Manheim, with an introductory note by Charles W. Hendels.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955. 269 pages. \$5.00.

One of the more confusing aspects of the current 'demythologizing' controversy is the fundamental lack of agreement as to the nature and function of myth. The problem is not merely one of definition however, nor is it self-evident that it is due to the general tendency of theologians to overlook empirical data. For the

¹Elder Olson, "William Empson, Contemporary Criticism and Poetic Diction," *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, R. S. Crane, editor (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 46.

²R. S. Crane, "The Critical Monism of Cleanth Brooks," *ibid.*, p. 106.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

anthropologists and social psychologists are in no closer agreement than the theologians and the philosophers. Myth has alternately been conceived as a primitive and pre-logical mode of thought (Durkheim), as a primitive form of philosophic speculation (Frankfort), as a social sanction (Malinowski), and as a form of entertainment (Edith Hamilton). In the face of this pluralism the late Franz Boas was forced to surrender the search for a common classification that would circumscribe all the manifold content and preferred to speak of "mythological concepts" which appears to be his way of saying "metaphysical." One is strongly tempted to conclude that one's definitions in this case are functions of one's more fundamental epistemological and philosophical presuppositions and that this is as true of a logical analyst as it is of the philosopher and theologian, a regrettable fact only if terminological agreement is one of the higher desideratum of philosophy.

Cassirer's monumental three volume work, of which this volume is the second, is not without its philosophical presuppositions, but his central categories are so suggestive, so viable, that any student of symbolism or myth cannot afford to forfeit the illumination which Cassirer brought to the problems. The wealth of facts and ideas relating to the history of religion alone is almost incredible and the hypothesis that is cast over the whole has a simplicity and beauty which must have gone a long way towards convincing Cassirer, critical idealist that he was, of its essential truth and validity. It is not difficult to believe that the schematism appeared to Cassirer in a momentary intuition, while he was riding home on a streetcar, as he later claimed it did.

Granting a more pedestrian form of insight to the editors of the Yale University Press ought not to vitiate our gratitude for their discernment of the need for this work, in the non-German reading world, not to mention their choice of Ralph Manheim as translator.

Cassirer's point of departure was the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, the assumption that external objects do not appear in their essential being to the mind but rather are mediated through the categories of the understanding. The representation of objects presupposes an "independent, spontaneous act of consciousness" so that one may say that the "object does not exist prior to and outside of synthetic unity but is constituted only by this synthetic unity" (p. 29). No fixed form imprints itself on the consciousness but rather the object is a result of the intuitive operation of that consciousness. The objective world is a product of judgment. This judgment, however, need not be only that of science which articulates its world in terms of causality, and law. There may be other modes of "judgment," other symbolic forms, besides those of science, such as art, and religion, and myth. Cassirer's work as a whole was an attempt to analyze the structure of these symbolic forms through which man has constructed his worlds and to ask, as did Kant, what are the conditions which make such worlds possible.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

The first volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* dealt with language, the second with mythical thinking. Mythical thinking is one mode of judgment which reveals, despite its complexity, a unity and 'logic' of its own. While employing the most diverse symbols and signs it is, nevertheless "a unitary perspective of consciousness" which cannot be reduced to other perspectives nor dismissed as a 'disease of language.' It differs from the other symbolic forms such as science not in the fact that it lacks the *a priori* categories of space, time and causality, but in the fact that these categories exist in a different modality (p. 60f). They appear in a different way than they do in the perspective of science. A proper approach would be one, then, in which the philosopher devoted himself to an *analysis* of how these fundamental categories which appear in all modes of thought are articulated in the peculiar consciousness which we call mythical.

The first part of the volume deals with myth as a form of thought, the second part with it as a form of intuition which includes a more systematic analysis of the mythical articulation of the categories of space, time and number. In a sense the latter is the most imaginative and suggestive portion of the book. The analysis of time, for example, in the various religions—Persian, Prophetic, Chinese and Egyptian—is most illuminating.

As a form of thought myth can be contrasted with that of science. If the latter is characterized as a search for law, for systematically developed relations apprehended through number, myth knows of no law in this sense. It lives, as it were, in the momentary presence of the object. It hypostacizes qualities and relations, and it makes no distinction between the ideal and the real, between image and its object. Metamorphosis is the rule and this is precisely no rule in the scientific sense of the word. As a mode of thought it must of necessity utilize the categories of space, time, and causality but these categories are transformed through the peculiar form of feeling and will in which they inhere. Mythical thought goes back ultimately to its ground as a "life form."

It is in this final portion of the book which deals with myth as a life form and the 'dialectic of the Mythical Consciousness' that Cassirer's basic philosophical perspective is most clearly revealed. For Cassirer not only delineates and analyzes an autonomous symbolic form "myth" but he claims to discern an immanent logic in all thought—(of which myth is one example)—which of necessity leads it to a pure form of consciousness which in all cases seems to coincide quite strikingly with the insights of critical idealism.

Mythical thought, for example, must progress immanently to the higher stages of the specifically religious consciousness, a consciousness in which myth takes on a symbolic character and therefore is no longer held as myth. "Religion takes the decisive step that is alien to myth: in its use of sensuous images and signs it recognizes them as such. . ." (p. 239). All higher religions, therefore, remain in tension

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

with their mythical heritage, both utilizing it and yet relativizing its importance. Cassirer on the one hand seems to affirm that this tension can never be completely resolved and yet, on the other, seems to conceive the summit of religious consciousness as the state in which it approaches a pure mysticism of world harmony. ". . . the harmony itself is the enduring, universal miracle which negates and thereby absorbs all others in itself" (p. 259).

This pure religious harmony seems to be somewhat similar to modern philosophical idealism which has arrived at this same conclusion by entirely different methods and on the basis of other presuppositions.

The correlative motif running side by side with the notion of an immanent logic is that human self-consciousness only comes to self-awareness in and through its mythological projections. Polytheism, for example, is a necessary stage in the progressive self-realization of the human spirit (p. 223). Man literally achieves self-consciousness in and through his theology. We may ask, Is ethical monotheism therefore only a necessary stage in the unfolding of the human spirit? And is religion, finally, only the history of man's self-knowledge? If an affirmative answer is given, in what sense can religion be said to relate the believer to objective reality? (One may postpone the further question as to whether this is an inverted Hegelianism.)

This raises the fundamental question about Cassirer's work as a whole: what is the relation between the symbolic forms? Are myth and religion genuinely autonomous modes of thought and conception alongside science and art, or is the one (myth) only a provisional mode of thought which must pass into religion, more specifically religion where truth is judged to be that of critical idealism mystically conceived?

Van A. Harvey

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Reports and Notices

British Don's Conference

The third general conference of British University Dons was held in Sheffield from March 30 to April 4. Constituted in a much less formal way than our own various movements amongst university teachers, including the Faculty Christian Fellowship, it was planned by an Advisory Group, of which Michael Foster, Christ Church, Oxford, is chairman and financially underwritten by the Christian Frontier Council, a movement among Christian intellectuals of which the moving spirit has been J. H. Oldham, and by the British S.C.M. The sessions themselves were brilliantly chaired by Dr. Kathleen Bliss, one-time Editor of *The Christian Newsletter*.

In attendance were approximately one hundred university lecturers and researchers from such widely distributed points as London, Oxford and Cambridge to the South, St. Andrews and Edinburgh to the North, Cardiff and Exeter in the West and Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the East; and representing the various elements of British university education from the ancient foundations of Oxbridge, the older Redbrick universities, such as Manchester, and the newest experiments in higher education such as have been recently begun under the influence of the late Lord Lindsay of Birker, the University College of North Staffordshire.

The distribution of conferees over the range of the academic fields which are recognized in Britain was equally wide, albeit, it was natural in view of the theme of the conference, that represent-

atives of the various natural sciences should be in the majority.

The general theme of the conference was "Christian and Scientific Beliefs." The format of the entire program called for a confrontation of Biblical and Scientific views concerning such root problems as "The Creation and the Destiny of the Universe," "Time," "Revelation and Discovery," etc. In each case, so far as possible, a scientist and a theologian were granted the opportunity of presenting an initial statement of an hour's length on a given subtopic, followed by discussion in plenary session. Then the conference adjourned to smaller discussion groups where the content of a given lecture was thoroughly hashed out. These being concluded, questions to be directed to the lecturer before another plenary session were formulated by each group. Finally, the lecturers appeared together before the entire conference for queries and comments.

Such formidable talent as the following read papers: Mr. Peter Alexander, lecturer in Philosophy, Leeds University on "Difficulties which the Scientist Experiences in Accepting Theological Statements;" Canon C. E. Raven, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, Regius Professor of Divinity and recent Gifford lecturer, on "The Bible and Modern Science," Dr. D. M. MacKay, lecturer in Physics, King's College, London, on the same topic; Dr. J.A.T. Robinson, Dean of Clare College, Cambridge and Professor of New Testament Theology and Professor H. Bondi, Professor of Math-

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

ematics, King's College, London, and author of a scientific cosmology made popular by Mr. Fred Hoyle, on "The Creation and the Destiny of the Universe;" and Charles Coulson, Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics, Oxford and Dr. A.C. Craig, lecturer in Biblical Studies, Glasgow on "Revelation and Discovery."

One can hardly praise enough the quality—both as to form and content—of these lectures. The ultimate expression of British enthusiasm—"absolutely first-rate"—must be accorded them. But even more remarkable than these, in a sense, was the level of discussion sustained by the conferees themselves. It was not merely that it exhibited great sophistication and subtlety of insight; but that there was a kind of disciplined attention to distinguishing between the relevant and the irrelevant which would have been shocking enough in any gathering but *unbelievable* in a group of college teachers!

Mr. Alexander's brilliant paper—especially valuable in that it came from a frank agnostic—threatened to undermine the entire conference on the first evening by showing with great clarity and without any resort to supercilious "point-scoring"—that there is not, and indeed logically cannot be any conflict between scientific and Christian beliefs, since they are of logically different orders. Fortunately it was possible to recover the equilibrium of the conference by observing that while it might be the case, the vast majority of our contemporaries were unaware of this, so that it was a fruitful enquiry to seek to

establish the ways in which these sets of beliefs *seemed* to conflict.

Notwithstanding Dr. Bliss' valiant efforts to overcome the caginess of the lecturers, the atmosphere was generally so irenic that one was at times a bit depressed to think that the Gospel had ceased to be a stumbling block.

These difficulties may in part be traced to the fact that, unfortunately, science was for all intents identified with physics. Philosophical sophistication of a sort has bred a certain modesty amongst the physicists, so that one suspects the "problem of science and religion" has ceased to be a problem at that point, because science, at that point, has ceased to be a religion—at least among the scientists. One suspects, however, that had science been represented in the discussion by neo-behavioristic psychology, the issue might not have seemed so easily dispatched. Or, if the social "sciences" had entered the discussion! But, then, Britain has so far been spared the metaphysical pretensions of psychology and sociology, since they do not have any such disciplines, in our sense.

It is perhaps worthwhile to compare briefly the British and American faculty movements since they are genetically related and since, great differences between education in Britain and America aside, they have so much in common. (1) As different in many ways as are the products of Oxbridge and London from those of the provincial universities there is a homogeneity of intellectual background in those respects relevant to the prospering of a faculty movement in Britain, which, I think, we do not have

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

here. (2) The level of theological sophistication, to say nothing of the simple knowledge of what is really the Bible, which one found in those who attended the Sheffield Conference, was extraordinarily high. (3) The American movement, typically perhaps, is pragmatic and holistic in its approach in comparison with the British movement. Our

orientation tends to be discipline-teacher-student-classroom directed with the more theoretical problems of, e.g., Scientific and Christian beliefs following along behind. For this conference at any rate, what the Christian teacher does in his academic context, given that all these theoretical problems exist, was very remote.

A Research Project

Those who are particularly interested in the contents of this issue of *The Christian Scholar* will want to know that a Ford Fellowship was granted recently for a project on "The Semantic and Epistemological Status of Religious Assertions." Dr. William P. Alston, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan, was selected for the special research project. His description of the project as presented in his request is illuminating of the present need as he sees it for work in this area of research.

"Philosophers have generally handled religious beliefs either by constructing for them logical justifications which rest on non-religious facts, or by rejecting them as lacking the grounds required for any factual assertion. Both approaches presuppose that religious assertions are properly classed with the "factual" assertions of common sense, science, and (perhaps) metaphysics for purposes of interpretation and criticism. When this presupposition has been challenged, it has usually been by those who would construe religious assertions purely as expressions of emotions or non-cognitive attitudes.

"But in recent times several intellectual currents have been set in motion which tend toward another mode of interpreting religious discourse, one which would assign it to a sphere all its own and would view it as an independent form of symbolization in its own right, not to be explained by or reduced to any other. (1) Existentialists of a religious bent have stressed the role which a commitment of the total personality plays in religious assertion. (2) The Oxford Wittgensteinians have developed a technique for elucidating the informal "logic" of the use of expressions in various areas of discourse and have thereby discovered important differences between types of discourse which had been heretofore lumped together. (3) Cassirer and his followers have developed the notion of the "mythical" as a special, *sui generis* way of viewing the world and of articulating that view in language. (4) Many students of religion outside of philosophy have uncovered aspects of religion which reveal some of the peculiar features of religious discourse. Noteworthy examples are: the "ritualists" (Raglan, Hooke, Harrison, etc.), who have stressed, and copiously illustrated, the integral place of myths,

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

dogmas, etc., in ritual activity and the impossibility of adequately understanding them apart from their ritual functions; and, the psychoanalysts who have investigated the functions of religious symbols in the economy of human life. "It seems to me that all these modes of thought are, in their religious bearing, pointing in the direction of an interpretation of religious assertions as cognitive, purporting to refer to something objective (as opposed to interjectional expressions of emotion), but in a quite different manner from the assertions of common sense and science, and hence as possessing a mode of referring and signifying all their own. But in none of these areas has an adequate theory of this sort been worked out. The non-philosophers, of course, provide us with material for a theory rather than the theory itself. But even among the philosophers the promise still far exceeds the performance. The existentialists do not have any explicit theory of religious language which would consolidate and

render more intelligible their oracular insights into the nature of religious belief. The Oxford philosophers have devoted little attention to religious discourse, and what they have produced in this area has been rather crude and deficient in a sensitivity to the extra-linguistic context. Cassirer and his followers have presented their viewpoint in terms which seem to me rather sweeping and nebulous, and sorely in need of careful treatments of specific problems and careful analyses of particular examples.

"In the light of this analysis of the situation we must explore further the relevance of these various approaches to the problem at hand, with particular attention to the ways in which they can be seen to supplement and correct each other. Then on the basis of this exploration we must work toward the construction of an adequate theory of religious assertions as having a semantic and epistemological status which is peculiar to them."

The Faculty Christian Fellowship Movement *

A recent report by a faculty self-study committee in a Midwestern university contained the following statement (which is fairly illustrative of the "tone" of the entire report) :

It seems to us that among all views known to us Christian concepts of man, values, and the world give the best basis

for liberal education, for that education which most inclusively and meaningfully organizes human experience and knowledge, and which seeing man as a whole does most to develop the capacities which are distinctive of man. We believe that convinced Christians will normally equate liberal and Christian education at their best.

On this committee the fields of natural science, social science, and philosophy were represented.

The statement is significant in that it represents a trend of thinking among teachers from every academic discipline,

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BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

and in every kind of college or university. True, this is as yet a minority viewpoint. The *dominant* view among college faculty continues to be that Christian concern and the higher educational enterprise cannot be united without damage to both.

But the new trend is unmistakable. It is doubtful that even ten years ago a committee of competent educators would have agreed to the statement quoted above; or, if they had, they might well have lacked the courage to submit it to their colleagues. Now, it is almost impossible to read everything of this nature being said by faculty persons in books, periodicals, and addresses.

The reawakened concern among faculty for Christian values in higher education is not some excitement worked up by representatives of church boards of education. Rather it is a largely spontaneous growth within the academic community, representing a profound soul searching among educators themselves. So definite and widespread is the concern that within the past three years a nationwide Faculty Christian Fellowship movement has come into being. Let us take a closer look at the background, present status, and potentiality of this movement.

The Faculty Christian Fellowship was organized at Berea, Kentucky, in October, 1952. Two previous consultations on the need for such a group had been held in 1951 and March of 1952. A continuing committee appointed at Berea made arrangements for the first F.C.F. national conference at Park College, Mis-

souri, in June, 1953. The theme of this first national conference was: "The Responsibilities of the Christian Professor in the Academic Community."

Since June, 1953, the Fellowship has continued to grow, with increased interest and discussion manifested in many quarters. Two important consultations between the F.C.F. executive committee and representatives of various interested agencies were held in October of 1953 and 1954, respectively. Since October of 1954, the Fellowship has moved toward a more clearly defined structure and a definite membership.

While the F.C.F. does represent a genuine, deep-reaching concern on the part of active college and university teachers, it has grown up in a context within which many types of work on behalf of religion in higher education have been carried on. Many varied bodies have made direct and indirect contributions. Among these are: the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, the General Service Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., and numerous Protestant churches.

Perhaps the most telling contribution of the Protestant churches has come through the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. The Commission on Christian Higher Education of the Council arranged for Dr. J. Edward Dirks to give half his time to work on behalf of the F.C.F. while he served as executive

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

director of the Department of Campus Christian Life.

As the F.C.F. takes on a more clear-cut nature and direction, its declared objectives are significant:

To help college and university faculty members increase their understanding of and their commitment to the Christian faith.

To help faculty members relate the insights which arise from their Christian faith to their vocations as teachers and to the subject-matter fields in which they teach and write.

To promote fellowship and understanding among Christian faculty members, helping them to discover and make explicit the ways in which their Christian faith contributes to an understanding and acknowledgment of their responsibilities in the educational world, and in their community, state, nation, and world.

To encourage conversation among all members of the academic profession who take their vocation seriously, whether they are within or outside the Church, and to encourage re-examination of the Christian faith and competing world views by Christians and non-Christians in the academic communities.

To serve as liaison in the co-ordination and co-operation among all agencies and groups in this area of endeavor.

To assist in publications which are a medium of communication among all persons who desire to share in this emerging movement.

To provide such leadership, statesmanship, and vision in the long-term planning of policy in this field as it may contribute in co-operation with all other agencies, groups, and churches.*

These objectives are finding expression in numerous concrete ways. For instance, the F.C.F. gives assistance in planning, promoting, and conducting conferences and seminars for faculty members who are concerned with the

objectives the movement represents. It works with all organizations which share these objectives. It provides resource materials for groups on individual campuses, and seeks to develop intercampus fellowship. It continues to co-operate with the Commission on Christian Higher Education in the preparation and promotion of *The Christian Scholar*, together with occasional newsletters, treatises, manuals, and bibliographies.

Dr. John Dixon of the Emory University faculty has been granted a two-year leave of absence beginning with this autumn, to give full time as director of the Fellowship. One of his immediate responsibilities will be to plan for a second national F.C.F. conference in the summer of 1956. His long-term task is to lead in developing a *definable* community of Christian concern in the academic world—and to accomplish this without impairing the spontaneous creativity out of which the movement has emerged.

No one can predict the future of the Faculty Christian Fellowship. It could well run its course within a few years, failing to discover the avenues for progressive self-expression within the academic community so necessary to its continued vitality. On the other hand, what we see now as the Faculty Christian Fellowship movement could prove to be a portent of a restoration of concern for Christian values at the heart of the educational enterprise. There are some signs which suggest the latter may be the case.

Richard N. Bender

*A folder about the Faculty Christian Fellowship will be sent to anyone upon request. Write the Office of *The Christian Scholar*, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

New Commission Director

Dr. Hubert C. Noble, Chaplain and Professor of Religion at Occidental College, Los Angeles, has been elected General Director of the Commission on Christian Higher Education of the National Council and took office August 15. He replaces Dr. Raymond McLain, who left the Commission to head the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

The new executive received his undergraduate training at Occidental College where he was later to be Acting Dean of the Faculty, 1949-1950. He holds graduate degrees from Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, and has carried on post-graduate study at the University of Strasbourg.

An ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., Dr. Noble has, in addition to pastoral experience, a long

record of work with students and in the field of Christian Higher Education. He has particular interests also in the area of the churches' concern for a just and durable peace and has served in many conferences and consultations in this area.

Faculty Christian Fellowship Director

Another new member of the Commission family is Dr. John W. Dixon, Jr., Art Historian on leave from Emory University, Georgia, who came to a two-year assignment as Executive Director of the Faculty Christian Fellowship on August 1.

Educated at Emory & Henry College and the University of Chicago (Ph.D.) with graduate study abroad, Dr. Dixon is well-prepared both by interest and experience in the formative days of F. C. F. to undertake its leadership at this time.